THOMAS BARILLOT

YOKOVERSE

A COMPREHENSIVE CODEX



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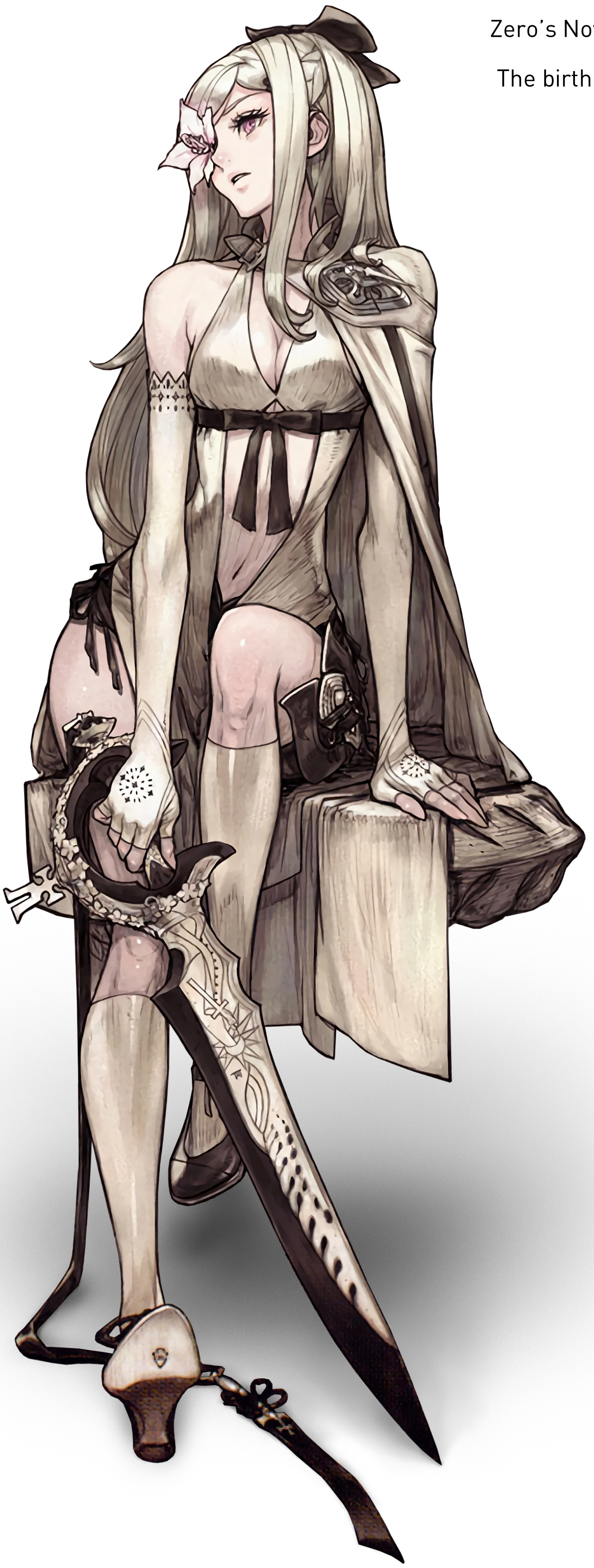
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YOKO FACTS (Interviews and development secrets)

CHAPTER 1

Drakengard 3

A cursed world, and the girl who hated it.



Drakengard 3's backstory

Up until 865, the world of Drakengard was identical to ours:

Plague is spreading throughout Eastern Europe.
Japan has introduced a new administration system and syllabary—both heavily inspired by China's.
And lastly, the Treaty of Verdun has just divided the Carolingian Empire into three kingdoms.



However, this particular year, a series of devastating earthquakes occurred in Corinth, Tunisia, Iran, and Kyoto, killing hundreds of thousands of people all around the world. Those were the first sign of an unprecedented event: "The Great Disaster" (also called "The Cataclysm"). This term refers to a giant earthquake that shook the Iberian Peninsula from which a mysterious metropolis has risen seemingly out of thin air: a city that will later be called "Cathedral City" (as seen on the left).

The event brought powerful creatures to the world, such as Dragons and otherworldly beings like the Watchers. But even more concerning is the apparition of the Black Flower: a powerful entity that may be a tool of the "Gods" or even a deity itself. We will learn more about this Flower in the upcoming chapters as its effects are scattered all over the Yokoverse.

Back to the world of Drakengard. The Dragons have caused havoc in the years immediately after, which topple and destroy the empires. In year 865, the continent of Europe casts aside the concept of individual countries and became one unified body known as Midgard. Riots erupt in most cities. People are fleeing from their ruined home towns. They are heading toward Cathedral City, that many consider as Humanity's last shelter. Nobles and intellectuals from the former kingdoms also escaped to the Cathedral City with little more than their lives and set up the Pythagoras Institute to study the disaster, calamity, and rise in abnormalities throughout the world. They claim the empty city as their own and prevent refugees from entering the metropolis: Cathedral City could not accept all the refugees for lack of food. In order to regulate how many people were allowed to enter the city, they built the Chaldea Gate in three days. Rioting broke out between the refugees and the City's Self-Defense Forces, which continued to rage on for the following week. This massacre is referred to as the "Ten Days of Tragedy".

For the next 10 years, Cathedral City would have a no immigrant policy because of the event. During that period of complete isolationism, a few people in Midgard have realized their ability to use strange powers, called Miracles by the population; Magic is real, and those able to use it are called "Users".

Users quickly climbed the social hierarchy, becoming vital figures in the social and political sphere. Faith and religions of the past begin to deteriorate as the new concept of "Users and Miracles of the Pythagoras Institute Church" spread throughout the community. The Church will be experimenting increasingly on Magical techniques in the following years.

Chaldea Gate is reopened in the year 878 and the Cathedral City function expands. Using Magic to overthrow the autonomous regions of Midgard, the Church place its own Rulers at the head of each section of the continent. This mark the beginning of the Feudal Kingdom Era.

Midgard is divided into 5 sections:

Austria-Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece all form together the Land of Forest. Shaxor, the young local Ruler, is living inside the Forest Shrine ①, located inside a giant tree. The Lost Forest ②, an inextricable and foggy forest, can be found further south. In its center, the Forest of Light ③ is filled with wolves and trees with creepy faces. Lastly, the Forest of Faeries ④, homeland of the Faeries and kingdom of the Faerie King. Speaking of Faeries, the Land of Forest is filled with "subhuman" species, created from humans exposed to high concentrations of Maso particles (magic). Those also include Trolls, Elves, Minotaurs, and Orcs.

The East of Europe, including our current Sweden, Norway, and Finland, form the Land of Mountain. Its Ruler is living in the Mountain Fortress ⑦. The Snowy Peaks ⑥ and Mt. Bernstein of the Vice Norden ⑤ are situated further north.

Poland, Czechia, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and France form together the Land of Sands. The Ruler, called Bass, lives in the East inside the Shrine of Sands ⑩. In the middle, the Surface Ruins ⑨, and further west is the Underground Ruins ⑧. It is a large nation mostly covered in desert, making it unsuitable for farming. Magnetite is its main export. While far from a wealthy land, its many ruins have seen tourism interest from wealthy merchants in recent years.

The British Isles host the Land of Seas, ruled by Caerula, a skilled User. She keeps her beautiful looks through a savage form of magic by stealing the youth of others, allowing her to rule over the nation for almost a century. She is living at the Shrine of Seas ⑬, a giant colosseum inside Sunken City. More than a century later, Zero will take refuge here, at her secret cottage ⑫.

Lastly, Cathedral City ⑪, in the middle of the Iberian Peninsula: we already talked a lot about the metropolis.



Please note that Midgard is identical in shape to real-world Europe, albeit flipped upside-down.

During the next century, there was a huge gap between the rich and the poor. It is known that crime was rampant during this time, along with murder, extortion, and torture. It was said that soldiers often stole and extorted the peasant class for food and money and rape was also common among soldiers against women and children. Feudal Lords, had few to no restrictions on their actions as Bass would often kill children and use their parts as decorations and Caerula was known to sap people of their youth to extend her life. The Church, and more precisely The Central Magic Academy of Cathedral City, became the main actor in all political, technical, and social decisions. It assures its authority throughout Midgard by placing Magic Academy in all four other regions.

In 960, more than a century after the Great Disaster, the first Magic Academy president is elected. Since the newly elected president was not familiar with magic at all, this causes a void between the Church echelon and the Lords of the Land. Unease among the magicians in the Magic Academy begins to fester. Eventually, in 971, many disgruntled students decided to revolt against the Lords in an event called the “White Rebellion”. Although incensed magicians rally for the replacement of the president within the Central Magic Academy located in the Cathedral City, they are suppressed in a single night.

The White Rebellion, although short-lived, was the catalyst for the Blue Revolt. Magicians dissatisfied with the corruption going on within the Magic Academy and the politics regarding the food shortage for poor class, decided to form an underground organization to start a revolution. This group became known as the "Blue Corps". Many young magicians approved them. Even some of the Lords of the Land who are dissatisfied with the Church approved. The Church is said to be weakening as their armaments and talented people dwindle under the food shortage and engaging in bribery for many years.

In 991, a large-scale revolt (the Blue Rebellion) breaks out in the Cathedral City by the Blue Corps. The Blue Corps occupies the Central Magic Academy with the hope to put a halt to the government and the Church. Their long-term goals include "abolishing the Lords of the Lands' power while establishing freedom and independence of the Magic Academy". Nonetheless, the Blue Corps are entirely decimated overnight by a Seal Magic attack that encompasses the entire city. At the same time, 80% of the citizens who live in two wards of the city die as catalysts for the Seal Magic. Even though there were some survivors, they appeared to have lost their minds in the confusion, construction to bury them alive was underway. To appease the remaining tensions, the Church decided to grant the Magic Academy’s independence.

After the Rebellion, the number of applicants approved by the Magic Academy to become legal magicians decreases sharply. The government and Church increasingly depend upon the military prowess of the Lords of the Land. The situation of the Magic Academy and the Church falls into uncertainty. Even though they managed to obtain independence, the Magic Academies end up losing the support from the Lords of the Land, and follow the same path toward decline. Magical experiments by the opposition continue vigorously. The Magic Academy lifts a ban on a previously forbidden magical art. The balance of magical power in Midgard falls into chaos.

In 995, an unprecedented large-scale accident occurs within the Central Magic Academy in the Cathedral City. It is said to be a singing error of the forbidden art by a female magician, but the details of the accident are unclear. It is discovered later that dust from the explosion appeared to resemble a gigantic flower in the night sky. The scale of destruction from the accident encompasses the entire city; all traces of people within the city fade away as the city is reduced to ruins. The Black Flower is then sealed behind the Mercurius Gate once again. Unfortunately, a small portion of the Flower escaped. The Gate is kept by Bartas, a very mysterious entity capable of reading and speaking the language of the Old World. He was originally discovered sleeping within the inner walls of the Cathedral City leading up to the Mercurius Gate. His exact identity or his power's origin is unknown, but both he and the Gate appeared in 856 as part of the city.

Two years later, a young girl slowly dying of illness is caught and placed in a cell with five other girls. She is called Rose (or Usubeni in Japanese). These girls were subject to horrible torture, unlike her, who was simply given a few lashes instead. The girls all died one by one, with Rose being the last one alive. In her last moments, she gazed upon a beautiful pink flower that appeared on the ground. Rose is dead, Zero is born.

Zero's Novella – A Rain to End and a Flower to Begin

From Drakengard 3 Official English Website (no longer exists)

Rainy days are never good, I thought, as I stared through the rain pounding down relentlessly around me. I felt the rise of an unexpected laugh. As if sunny days were any better.

"What is it?" a voice next to me asked, weakly. It was so frail that the rain threatened to wash it away.

"What is what?" I replied and wished I hadn't. People who answered questions with questions disgusted me. I used to make sure they never answered anyone again. Every time.

"I can hear you crying."

"You're mistaken. That was a laugh." I couldn't blame her. How could she have read my expression? They had taken her sight; pried open both her lids and thrust needles into each eye. And that was not the only torture she had endured. Repeated burns from a branding iron had reduced her palms and the soles of her feet to rotted, reeking flesh, and the joints of all four limbs had been ruined to the point where she couldn't even turn in her sleep.

I won't stop here and lament that people are willing to do something so brutal to a girl of so few years. I practically expect it from landed lords, or else why would she and her friends have tried to start a revolt in the first place? The damned fools. And it was foolish. They were found before they could even pick up their weapons, let alone revolt. Sold out by one of their own. That's what you get for trusting other people. There is no such thing as a person incapable of betrayal.

That said, the stubborn ones like her who held out were given the same mangling as the ones who confessed immediately, and all were laid out here, onto the cobblestones of the square. Being clever didn't earn anyone a better outcome. Their lord may not have treated them fairly, but he did treat them equally.

If any one thing could be called unequal, it was that five fine souls who tried to strike down an oppressive lord were chained up here next to a common murderer like me. There was no making sense of that one. I wasn't tortured the way they were. I had no grand scheme or friends to give up. Since I had nothing to confess, no one shattered my bones or ripped my fingernails off. All I got was a vicious lashing.

The pain, which had felt like flames leaping across my back, was gone now. There was no sensation left. The cold rain must have been nipping at my back, but I felt no chill. Knowing it meant my death was near made it no less strange. "What a waste of life." There was no stopping the laughter now. I couldn't remember a single good day, rain, or shine. My life had been hell from as far back as I could remember, and undoubtedly from the first moment I came into the world.

My earliest memory is of my mother shouting, and the only other thing I remember from those days is being slapped around. I doubt I was fed well, either. After all, I learned to swipe a meal before I even learned to speak. If she'd been feeding me properly, I wouldn't have been forced to steal.

My mother shouldn't be singled out as a bad person. Only a handful of kids were lucky enough to have warm food and a bed. Unless you were born into some fancy noble household, you could kiss any hope of a life like that goodbye. You wondered why the hell you were born, grew up knowing you were a thorn in the world's side, turned into a shitty adult, and then unwittingly wound up with a bun in the oven. That was it for most women. My mother did nothing more than raise me the best way she knew.

Once I reached an acceptable age, my mother sold me without a second thought—for a pittance, when I thought back on it later. As was the way, I was sold to a brothel, where women who looked a lot like my mother attended to men with tight purse strings.

It wasn't all older women; there were girls my age. I became fast friends with one. She called me "Rose," which was how I learned the color of my eyes. "Haven't you ever looked in a mirror? she asked in surprise when I told her. Of course not. I couldn't have cared less what I looked like.

I decided she should be called "Indigo." As little as I cared about my own face, I realized her eyes were a pretty color. Rose and Indigo: they were names that belonged only to us.

One day, Indigo suggested we steal some money and run away. I nodded, believing that together, the two of us could do anything. I never stopped to think about where we would run or what we would do after.

The plan went off brilliantly; we took as much money as we could carry, and fled out of town and across the bridge to the far side of the river. There was a man waiting there with a horse. I had seen him before; he was a patron who hung all over Indigo. "If we make it across the river, everything will work out," she had said, and now things were starting to click.

I thought for certain they would take me with them; how utterly wrong I was. They had planned to kill me all along. Indigo could only carry so much money by herself; that was why she'd approached me. The only reason. "No hard feelings, Rose." And then she grinned. It was the same smile as always, but then I knew. Underneath it had been a girl who was figuring out how to kill me. Took me long enough to see it.

If the pursuers hadn't come right then, my life would have been over. The other two galloped off in a hurry, and I alone was caught. I never resented Indigo for it. Rather, I was rankled by my own witlessness. Why did I trust another person? Of course, it was my fault for being fooled. If things had played out differently, Indigo and that man would be the ones lying dead by the river, and I'd have been the one to get away. Next time, I thought, I'll do better.

My chance came several months later. I took the gold and got away with ease; I might have even put Indigo to shame. To keep pursuers off my back, I slaughtered everyone: the procurers, their underlings, the women. It wasn't hard. All I had to do was wait until they were sound asleep, then end them one by one.

I killed the procurers first; next, the men they'd hired to do the dirty work. Thanks to the poison I'd thrown into the casks, they were half dead already. Even with my meager strength, it wasn't hard to finish off men who had already ceased moving. Once the men were taken care of, work went fast. Women never smell blood. Torrents of the stuff were flowing right by their side, but not one opened her eyes or let out a scream before expiring.

I took as much money as I could carry and left town before dawn. Of course, no pursuers came, but worse news did: bandits. They captured me handily and gleefully relieved me of every coin I had. And though they spared my life, I again felt the sting of failure.

I waited for my chance and escaped before they could sell me back into whoring. This time, thievery was out of the question. I knew I would be better off not trying to carry off their money. Any coin I had would just be stolen. If I needed something, I didn't have to buy it; I could take it. No one could rob from me if I had nothing to steal.

I did have one thing they wanted, though: myself. The bandits were ready to sell me, just as my mother had sold me; as a woman, I would always be someone's spoil. But that was beyond my control; I could not discard my womanhood or leave it behind. I suppose I could have made Indigo's choice and found a man to protect me. But people lie; people betray. I didn't want their protection. I would protect myself.

Wait. But I did live with a man. Just one, just once. I ran into one of that sleazy brothel's patrons. It was someplace far away, in some unfamiliar town. He remembered my face; I remembered his. I have to kill him, was my first thought. The procurers and the women were dead—all of them except for me. He wasn't so witless that he couldn't piece together what that meant. But, for whatever reason, I didn't do it. Instead, we found a corner of that unfamiliar town and started a life.

He wasn't witless, but neither could you call him honest; he was a thief with a talent for picking locks. Together, we raked in the coin and passed the days with amusement. As a life, it wasn't bad, and thoughts of killing him slipped away.

The life didn't last long, though. I got sick. A scourge was going around. Slowly but inexorably it eroded the body and killed you. Not only that, it was contagious. Fearing for his life, the man left me. I don't blame him,

and if it had ended there I would have let him go. But he was going to sell me out; a bounty had been placed on the "brigand" who had broken into the brothel.

What a fool. I had only just caught the scourge and my symptoms were still mild. I struggled to get up in the morning, got chills in the evening, broke into fits of severe coughing... But that was it. Nothing that would interfere with me taking a life.

Thus, I had no trouble reversing our fates when he came in my sleep to tie me up. The scourge had turned me into a light sleeper—and either way, I had a certain sensitivity to lethal intent. Before I could think, I had opened his gullet, and he died with the confusion still written on his face.

It was only then that I realized I'd never really let him into my life. Despite sleeping and eating with him, telling myself I was over killing him, it wasn't true. Otherwise, I wouldn't have constantly kept a blade hidden within reach.

And so, I was alone again. I journeyed aimlessly, filching food and clothes as I went. As I mentioned, the scourge was taking its time with me, so it was well within my ability to travel and plunder and kill. I murdered the owners of my spoils on the spot, women or elderly included.

Again and again I would hear, "Take the food and the money. Just spare my life. Please." It's strange; everyone makes the same face when death is close. Did I look at Indigo the same way? No, I never begged.

> "Suppose I do spare you. You're certain to hold this against me. You'll come for me one day."

> "I would never—"

"Never let it go, right? I just butchered your mother right in front of you." And unlike mine, this one must have been a good mother, considering she had thrust herself in harm's way to protect her daughters. "Anyway, I'd apologize for this, but that would only serve to make myself feel better, and I'm not that deluded." With that, I killed the two trembling sisters while they still clung to each other. No doubt they hated me in those last moments, but they would never come after me with a knife.

There were some who didn't beg. One was a girl a few years my junior.
Rage flared in her eyes as she lay into me.

> "Why!?" Why would you do this?"

> "Maybe because I'm hungry."

> "How dare you mock me!"

> "No one's mocking anyone. I'm starving, and don't have the coin for food."

"And you think that justifies this!?" Her father's and brother's bodies lay there in front of her. A bit further away was a woman who appeared to have been their cook. I always dealt with potential threats first, which meant I got stuck with children and elderly last. "You could have simply taken our gold and left!"

"Yeah. You know, you're right. I used to think it was about keeping people from seeking vengeance, but I'm starting to wonder if that's really it. Why do I do it?" But I had already strangled her before I could finish expressing my reservations. Her eyes were still wide when she took her last breath, still red with anger.
"I wish I could tell you."

I felt her gaze on my back as I took a loaf from the table. I hadn't been lying when I said I was starving. The whole reason I had picked this house was that the family looked rich. And since it was suppertime, food would be waiting to fill my belly. I had a good reason. But again, I wondered aloud: "Why?" I took food from the plates with my bare hands and washed it down with a swig from the decanter. My compliments to the chef.

"Why do I do it? Shouldn't I know after this many?" I asked the girl's limp body on the floor. I hadn't been keeping count; I didn't think it mattered. All I knew was that I had killed a lot of people. And yet I couldn't answer one simple question: Why do I do it?

"Maybe I kill to find out why."

The girl's dead eyes continued to glare at me. I guess it wasn't a good enough answer.

I continued to live like that for some time. Before I knew it, I had stopped searching for reasons or answers; I robbed people and killed them as easily as I drew breath.

The thing is, I entered public awareness around the time my kills reached triple digits. I had done my best to finish off everyone in the homes I breached and leave no evidence, but then again, I hadn't gone out of my way to be secretive, so I suppose I got made at some point.

My days became numbered once word got out about the young woman behind the merciless killings of young and old. Descriptions of my appearance circulated and merchants spread the word during their travels. Soon every town in every land was searching for the "witch with eyes of rose." The bounty for my capture would pay for a life at ease, and proper rewards were promised for even a decent lead.

And so I was caught. They surrounded me while the scourge was doing its work on me. By then, the symptoms had started taking their toll, and I was unable to resist, let alone escape. Soldiers in grand armor made an even grander fuss of binding me hand and foot.

My gamble—that the scourge would kill me first—had been wrong, and I was dragged off to the bastille. They condemned to the lash; I would be struck once for each life I took. Personally, I think I toughed it our rather well; they whipped me until my skin was in tatters and my flesh split, but I survived. Then again, if they had gotten my kill count right, I would have died for certain. Their tally came up woefully short, and so my punishment ended well before it could be called capital.

Of course, that didn't mean I was forgiven. They chained me up to die in the square, along with the five rebels. Directly next to me was the young girl I mentioned earlier. While the others no longer uttered so much as a groan, she continued her one assertion: "What we did was right." But her voice was growing ever fainter. When the lot was dragged out here, she was in the most miserable state. I could tell that she was keeping herself alive through sheer power of will alone.

I took advantage of her lack of sight and stared her up and down without reservation. Here was more or less my complete opposite: a girl whose sense of justice was hopelessly unswayable. The fact that we stood in this place shoulder to shoulder struck me as strange beyond words. Eventually, she inquired as to who I was. It was my fault for coughing; the scourge's distinctive and disagreeable bark gave me away as not being one of her friends. "Who are you? What's your name?"

"I don't have a name," I answered. "I don't have anything. No coin, no house, no family or friends or lover. Nothing at all. I give 'nothing' new depths. All I have is this life which is about to blink out along with everything else. I wound up with zero. Jack shit."

Because I did shit away my life. I lived empty day after empty day without purpose. It was so stupid in retrospect that I found myself laughing uncontrollably.

"Don't cry," the voice said.

"I told you...I'm laughing."

I was struggling so hard to breathe that it must have come out as spasms. Like any of those next breaths could have been my last.

"Really?"

"Yes."

I heard what might have been a sigh. The rain had finally eased into a drizzle. A moment later, her body convulsed for a few fleeting seconds, and then she stopped moving entirely.

"Hey..."

No answer.

"So, I guess it'll be me." It had been decided the last to survive would be burned alive with the bodies of the other five. One of the group bit her own tongue off when she heard. Another was dead by the time the bunch was dragged out to the square. Another died before the rain came, and a fourth during the downpour, leaving me and the girl.

Good luck burning me in this weather. Maybe they would try burying me alive with them instead. At least we can all take solace in the fact she wasn't the last to go. It wouldn't have been right if the one girl who had shown compassion for others right to the end had to die the worst.

But what was right? Who was right?

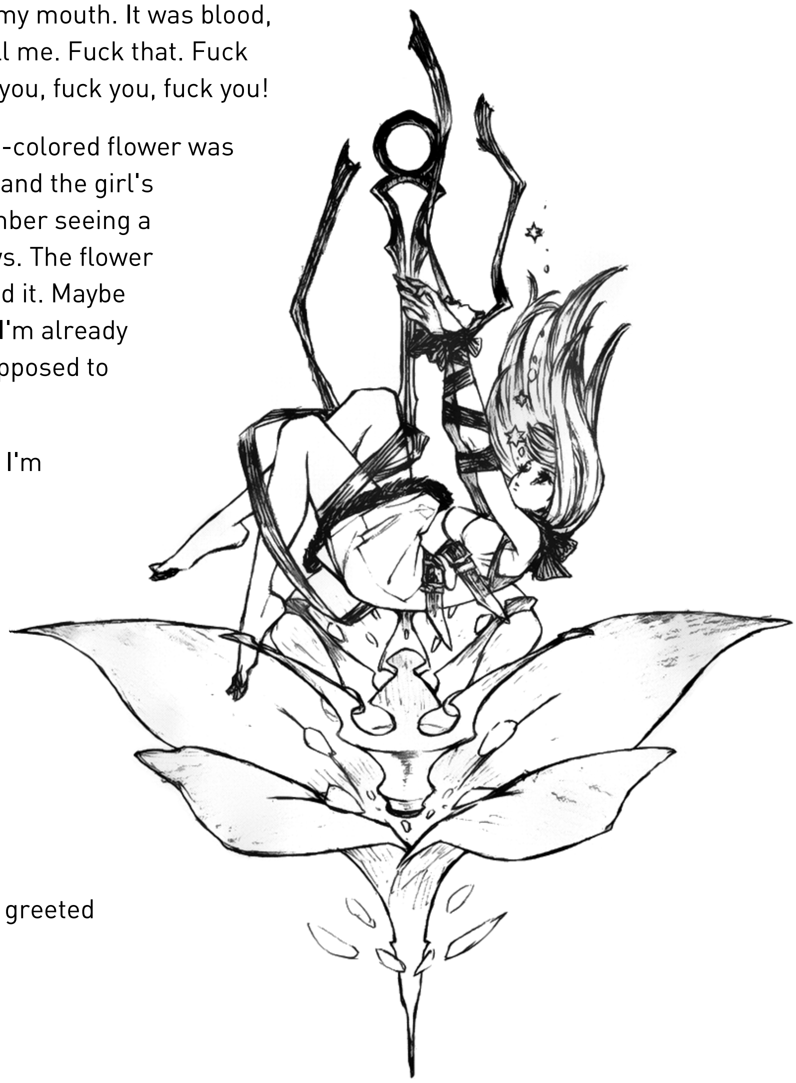
I could hear the girl's voice again: What we did was right. And it was. Only the world could be called wrong—this world full of lords who shit on their people, this world with smug murderers like me. This world where those who stand up on behalf of the weak are crushed like so many worms.

This is madness. It doesn't make any sense. Ire filled me all at once.

No. It had always been there and I just hadn't noticed. I hated the world. I had damned it in my mind since before I could remember. I could feel the tremor of a scream in my throat. Glurp. Something warm dribbled from my mouth. It was blood, not a scream. This fucking world is trying to kill me. Fuck that. Fuck the world! Fuck you all! YOU fucking die! Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you!

Then, all of a sudden, I noticed a flower. A rose-colored flower was blossoming right before my eyes, between me and the girl's corpse. Where did it come from? I don't remember seeing a flower there. It swayed beneath the rain's blows. The flower must have been new to me, and yet I recognized it. Maybe because its color is so like my eyes. Or maybe I'm already dead, and this is one of those flowers that's supposed to grow in Paradise.

No. Heaven won't have anything to do with me. I'm dying, and this is a hallucination. But that's all right. I still want to see it up close. I want to touch it. No one has ever given me a flower, and I've never longed for one. But this flower, I love.



I felt something constricting my sight. I wasn't able to shut my eyes, so I kept gazing at the flower. It was so lovely... My life may have been wasted, but this was not such a terrible final thing to behold.

As its widening petals filled my field of vision, I greeted the flower with a quiet smile.

Drakengard 3's backstory (continuation)

The flower that she saw revived her, healing her from illness in the process. It has taken root deep within her and the flower has bloom inside her right eye. It gave Zero the power of an Intoner. Intoners possess enhanced magic capabilities through the manipulation of magic via Songs. It is interesting to note that "The Power of Songs" uses energy from the flower and thus is fundamentally different from "normal" magic.

This ability allows them to enter "Intoner Mode": they become almost invulnerable to all forms of damage, their speed, reflexes, and power are also greatly augmented. However, it would seem that this ability puts a strain on the user's body as they are not able to stay in this mode for longer than a minute.

Much more concerning is the ability to summon Watcher. They are a mysterious group of otherworldly beings, sometimes refers as Grotesqueries, Angels, Nameless, Daemons, or erroneously Gods. They were created as the servants and agents of God, being their instruments in destroying humanity.

Lastly, Intoners have incredible healing capabilities and can come back from the dead (or reanimate other beings, e.g. the undead). They can also reflect attacks and protect themselves using "Song Shield".

In the following 8 months, Zero slowly learns more about her new abilities. However, she also realizes the true purpose of the Flower: it's a parasite that slowly consumes her body and her mind, making her a puppet. Once she is completely taken over, it will unleash "World Devastation". She became a tool of destruction through which the flower sought to further its ambition of destroying humanity.

Of course, Zero isn't very fond of this possible outcome and tries to remove the flower which had become attached to her heart. She does this by stabbing herself in the heart with her sword. The flower, sensing Zero's hostility towards it, created five young Intoners, copies of Zero, each receiving a fragment of Zero's powers. All five of them gained false memories to make their existence more believable. It is safe to assume that the Flower absorbed the memories of the five girls inside the prison's cell and used those as the basis for the Intoners. Each one of them also inherits a part of Zero's personality (it is unclear if Zero loses those traits or they are copied). Physically, they are all based on women Zero encountered during her life.

She immediately tries to kill them while they are still frail and defenseless. However, One protects her sisters and screams "NO! You traitor!" before guiding them toward safety. Zero, greatly weakened by her "suicide attempt", is left unable to move. She swears to kill the Intoners and to rid the world of the Flower's existence.

In the following months, the Intoners travel aimlessly as a sort of wandering superhero band. But upon seeing the evil and cruelty the Lords had inflicted upon the people, the Intoners set out to claim Midgard for themselves. What ensued was a yearlong conflict as the Intoners fought and killed the Lords of the Lands and became worshipped by the people as their great saviors.

Drag-On Dragoon Utahime Five (Manga)







Drag-On Dragoon Utahime Five (translated as Drakengard: Five Intoners) is a short manga series relating the adventure of the sisters during that period. Here is a summary:

The Intoners choose the Land of Sands to be their first target in their crusade in freeing Midgard. They enter the castle of Bass, the Lord of the land. His castle ornaments are made of the flesh of countless children and slaves. The Intoners manage to bypass his traps only to be captured by the Lord's guards. Bass himself appears after, piloting a giant golem that he uses to overwhelm the sisters. The Intoners manage to fight back and launch a counterattack. In the end, Bass begs One for his life, but receives no mercy. The Intoner disintegrates his head against a wall, with such force that the wall itself collapses on top of the headless corpse. Partition, Bass' former assistant, joins the Intoners.

Behind their righteous cause, the Intoners are also trying to practice their power and prepare themselves for Zero's arrival. They are seeking more power to kill "the traitor" one day. Partition, hearing this, reveals to the girls the alleged origin of all magic: Cathedral City, and more precisely, whatever lies beyond the Mercurius Gate. With this new information, the girls and the young magician board on a boat.

On their way toward the mysterious city, they are attacked by a kraken-like sea creature and One falls into the water. No one on board the ship is able to help her, but One eventually makes it ashore and dispatches the creature with the aid of her magic. Turning her back on the seemingly dead creature, One is tripped by one of its long tentacles, proving that it is far from dead. Luckily though, a black dragon appears just in time to save her by crushing the creature's head. The dragon presents herself as Gabriella (please note that Dragons are a sexless race, but they seem to have male or female-like personality and names).

While they speak, a man appears and battles One and the Dragon. This is none other than Bartas, the keeper of the Mercurius Gate. Gabriella gets mildly injured and contemplates retreat. One pushes herself beyond known limits and discovers her Intoner Mode. She manages to decimate Bartas until nothing is left of him, only to regain her senses and discover that he is able to regenerate his entire body. Within a burst of energy, the figure of a young boy emerges where the adult-looking Bartas once stood. One passes out. Gabriella, impressed by the young girl capacities, decides to flee with One and look after her during her month-long comatose state.

Outside of Utahime Five's story *Source translated by Bdouine & Linq, and*

During this period, Zero is spending most of her time researching the Flower's origin. According to some books from the Old World, Dragons are the natural enemy of the Flower, and only them can effectively kill it. She eventually met with the strongest of them during a battle. His name is Michael, he is boastful and arrogant, but those are recurring traits in most dragons. He then attempted to kill the Intoner as a game, but Zero used Michael's firepower and brute strength to eliminate the soldiers trailing her. While trying to kill her, he came to notice the flower growing within her and laughed at this realization. Once the soldiers were defeated, he didn't proceed with his attack and only asked to talk with Zero.

While transporting Zero to the mountains, Michael wanted to know more about her Flower. He further confirms Zero's research, explaining how dragons have an existence deeply connected with the Flower. Michael agreed to help Zero kill her Intoner sisters and kill Zero herself when the task was done.

During the next two months, Michael tested Zero's strength and power over the Flower by tasking her to kill countless magical beasts. As the final test of strength for Zero, he engaged her in battle within the Temple of Sands. Zero won the fight, and as promised, Michael began fighting by her side from then on as her friend and companion.

Learn more about Zero and Michael relationship in Michael's Novella: The Gone Away, on page 96.

Not long after, Zero meets with a strange figure. She introduces herself: her name is Accord, she is an android from a different era, and her purpose is to monitor "Timelines". She explains that Zero is a "Singularity", meaning that her existence can trigger a divergence, or branch across multiple worlds. The way Zero unfolds the story will determine the future of this branch. In the eventually of her losing against the Flower, Accord will be forced to seal this branch and search for another timeline where our protagonist actually succeeds. Irritated by Accord's prophecy, Zero kills her and throws her body from the edge of a cliff into the ocean. She leaves in direction of Cathedral City, in search of her sisters.

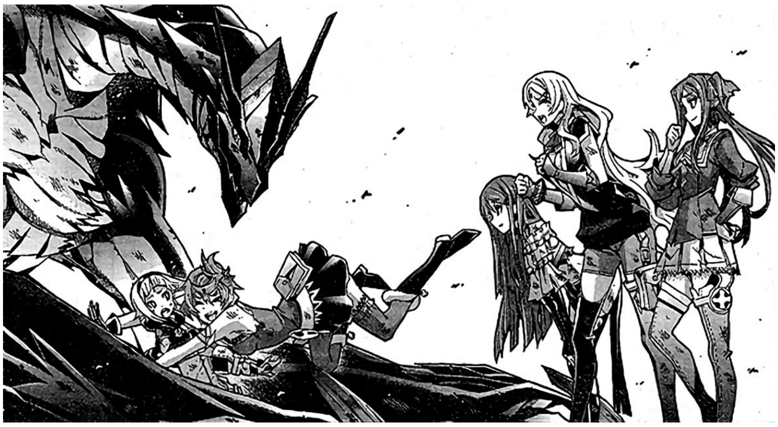
Neither the Intoners nor Zero arrive first at Cathedral City; Caerula, Gray, and Shaxor have also heard about the mysterious powers lying behind the Mercurius Gate, and they are eager to open it. On their side is Bartas. Caerula told him to go read aloud a certain text written in the Old World's language, to some sort of Terminal near the final gate. He does just that, but a holographic representation of Accord suddenly appears, stating that "The voice date is incorrect, please come again". Bartas promptly disappears. The Lords of the Lands have no other choice but to wait and prepare an ambush against the Intoners.

One flies toward Cathedral City, thanks to Gabriella. She meets her sisters and Partition along the way and together they arrive near the Gate. Just as they approach the door, the Lords attack them; in an instant, Two, Three, Four, and Five are killed. One screams at the top of her lungs in horror, unleashing an incredible amount of energy. The Gate resonates with her Power of Songs and opens, pouring black ooze on the bloody floor. The liquid quickly forms dislocated arms out of its shapeless surface. They move like tentacles, trying to grasp anything in sight. The black entity grabs body parts of the dead sisters and "put them back together". They are now nothing but puppets subject to the Black Flower will. No longer sealed behind the Mercurius Gate, it can directly force the Intoners to use their Power of Songs, summoning their Watcher from the sky. Armisael, Egregori, Phanuel, Armaros; they all get unleashed into the world, attacking the Lords and everyone nearby. Gray, the Lord of the Land of Mountains, is obliterated by Armisael's attack. The young—but far from innocent—Shaxor tries to seek refuge beside Caerula who kills him. She rips his heart out of his chest and absorbs his magical power. However, her new youth won't last for long: Partition kills her in the same manner.

In the meanwhile, Zero and Michael arrive at the city. They quickly realize how grave the situation is. She enchants four doves and sends them toward their respective Intoner. They envelop the sisters and thus deprive the Flower of their power. The Watchers immediately disappear and Michael takes advantage of this to strike the Black Flower. This attack seemingly melts it, it is unknown what happens to its physical form after this. Just when Zero confronts her sister One, Bartas reappears: His role as a gatekeeper is no more now that the Gate has been destroyed and its prisoner escaped. Deprive of any purpose, he is looking for an opponent capable of killing him.

Zero and One decide to fight together against Bartas. He is incredibly powerful; the two girls are incapacitated in no time. Even Michael, the strongest dragon, is not able to injure him. In a last attempt to save One's life, Gabriella uses her "Last Wish" to become a "Beast". Dragons have this ability to wish for almost anything, once in their life. Most of them use this on their death bed to reincarnate, making them "immortal". However, Gabriella chooses the path of the beast: in exchange for power, she will be reduced to nothing more than a mindless monster.

With her new power, the dragon pierces Bartas with a giant light beam, killing him instantly. Still in the middle of the Beastification process, she turns against her friend One. The Intoner implores Gabriella; she will do anything to bring her to her senses. She uses the most severe forbidden Magic of the Old World: a Pact. It's a contract between a human and a beast in which they become "Pact Partners". By merging their spirits, and using all nearby magical energy, she is able to save her friend. However, this comes at a price. Firstly, One will remain in her childish body and never grow up. Secondly, if one should be fatally injured, it means death for both unless the pact is broken.



One wakes up, leaning on Gabriella's wing, her sisters next to her.
They all are safe. They cry, laugh, and hug each other.

Just above them, Michael flights away with Zero passed out between his claws.

The End

This is the end of the Utahime Five Chapter. However, the story is far from over. Knowing that her sister Zero will eventually return to kill her, One "gives birth" to a clone of herself using one of her ribs. His name is One just like his sister. She trains with him in absolute secrecy; no one must know of his existence, not even her sisters. His purpose is simple: if One were to be killed by Zero during their battle, he should be the one to take Zero's life. She also entrusts a special sword to him, made using one of Gabriella's fangs. The weapon should be much more effective against an Intoner thanks to its draconic origin.

The other sisters having finished to take over all Lands, each becomes the leader of one of them. This is the end of the Feudal Kingdom and the yearlong Intoner Civil War. The Feudal Era also marked the end of Catholicism and really the end of all forms of religion as they would eventually be overtaken by Intonerism. The new Intoner Empire was swift in making policies that kept the common people out of poverty and famine and the Intoners punished the former nobility. Especially those who tried to oppose the Intoners directly. The Empire had a year to establish itself and, in that time, it managed to invent new technologies such as warships, airships, dragon busting cannons as well as improved weapons and armors. At some point, the subhuman and monster races were drafted into the Imperial Army and the Intoners are now being worshipped as goddesses.

The girls grow up abnormally fast: they are now adult-looking (except for One due to her pact), despite being 2 years old. It is also interesting to note that each Intoner has some sort of price to pay for their ability to use the Power of Song: One's senses grow keener daily, making each of her public appearance increasingly painful. She tends to stay enclosed within the silent wall of Cathedral City's Library. Two's strength continues to grow gradually despise her unchanging appearance. She makes substantial efforts to avoid breaking objects or hurting people. Three's hair continuously grows. She must cut them every day in order to move freely. Four's nails also continuously grow. She developed the habit of biting them throughout the day. She uses hand-to-hand combat weapons to hide them as she is ashamed of them. Lastly, Five's breasts grow at an ever-alarming rate, which seems to fuel her personality with bravado and confidence much to the envy of her other sisters. It can be said that Zero also paid for her powers by losing an eye .

Each Intoner is granted a disciple to assist her in her duties, as well as to protect her from harm. They function through the Intoner as a summoner of sorts and are tasked to regulate the Intoners' high sex drive. They were created by Zero as a means to siphon off the sisters' song power (they are the human form of the dove she used to stop their rampage during Utahime Five).

It is mentioned that a disciple's personality is shaped by the Intoner they are with, as in the case of Dito who alleges that Five brainwashes him to be her every desire. Although held fervently to the needs of their Intoners, disciples retain a sense of awareness, possessing distinct personalities that can potentially clash or agree with their respective Intoner. Some are more prevalent towards their duty of relieving the sexual desires of their Intoners, as illustrated by the casual nature of Octa asking his Intoner for sex.

To learn more about the everyday life of the disciples, you can read Cent, Octa, Decadus, and Dito's Novella on pages 75, 79, 82, and 86 respectively.

One spoke a lot with her Pact Partner Gabriella; the dragon is kind of afraid of Michael. For this reason, she asks the Intoner to transform her into a daemon. The dragon becomes Gabriel. Although he possesses the mind of a primal beast, he retained his bond and loyalty to One.

"...And thus, the Five Intoners defeated the evil lords of the land... The world that would have drowned in the depths of destruction once again found peace". Those are the words Partition wrote on a thick parchment, chained inside his room. He is also part of the new Empire regardless of his will. He has been tasked to embellish the Intoners story and deepen the population trust in the new government.

It is the end of the year 998. One asked everyone to come to Cathedral City before March 999. They must prepare before Zero's return. The following story gives us some information about One's everyday life during that period.

One's Novella – Visitors

Translation by kho-dazat

January 1st, 999 A.D.

On this, the first day of the new year, the faces of all the people within the Cathedral Capital were filled with joy. With my keen eyesight, I could tell that every last smile was a genuine one. Yes... I could see clearly the sparkle in their eyes, the laughter pouring from their lips... not a single person wore a troubled or forced expression.

Why should they? The scourge of the tyrant lords had been eliminated, the nobility that fostered them dismantled. The people had at last been released from their torment.
How long they had prayed for this day to come!

The only person struggling not to frown was me. It was all I could do to keep from covering my ears and falling to my knees... despite my being an Intoner. For a moment I wished I had my sisters with me, but I shook those thoughts from my head. While having all five of us situated in the capital would surely be heartening to the citizens, it would not make sense to have them abandon the posts which I had only just assigned them to. It wouldn't be long before I had to call them here in any case. Not much time remained before the 'day of promise'.

Facing the people crowding the streets, I gave a wave from atop my steed. This caused them to cheer even louder, and I felt the animal tense beneath me. I am not fond of horses due to their strong odor, but in this case, I could sympathize with the beast. We were both being forced to parade our way from the harbor towards the cathedral. I would have preferred to have snuck back after sunset; I wanted to be alone. My mind, exhausted from battle, sorely needed rest. But I was not allowed to be so selfish. It was my duty as an Intoner to symbolize order and peace having returned to the world, even if that meant being made a spectacle of. And how could the innocent people know that their cries of elation were causing me, with my heightened senses, to feel as if my head were being split in two?

January 27th

In the days following my return to the capital, I've been poring earnestly over the books in the cathedral library. I quite like it in here; the thick tomes muffle sounds from the outside, making it comfortably quiet. And while the smell of dust and must trouble my nose, it is nothing compared my usually having to take in the body odor of humans and animals.

That's right... it's not just my eyesight and hearing that are pronounced. All five of my senses, including taste, touch, and smell are torturously sensitive. It wasn't as bad when I was a child. Back then my senses were only slightly enhanced. But as I grew so did they, at a pace that far outstripped my physical development. Before long sounds and smells seemed to be assaulting me. I could no longer enjoy the taste of food due to it being too intense. Even the touch of my own clothes upon my skin made me feel deeply uncomfortable... those days before I developed a method of coping were very hard, and weighed heavily on my psyche. But all of us Intoners have one bodily aspect which develops excessively compared to the rest, as a side effect of our strength. Perhaps it's silly to expect that those as powerful as ourselves could hope to otherwise live normally.

I heard footsteps approaching. There were two pairs, one leading, the other following. They suddenly came to a stop, however, and seemed to hesitate for a moment before beginning to walk on tiptoes. Soon I heard a gentle knock at the door. From her thoughtful behavior, I could already guess who it was; my energetic yet very gentle younger sister, Two.

"It's open. You made it here quickly, Two..." As soon as I had called her name, the door made a terrible sound and I heard her give a little shriek.

"I-I'm sorry...! I broke it..." Two stood in the doorway, eyes full of tears. In her hand she still gripped the doorknob, the door ripped off its hinges still attached. Just as my senses were overdeveloped, so too were Two's muscles. While she looked quite slight, her arms and legs held the strength of ten men. It was easy for her to break things or hurt people, so Two usually took great care to restrain her movements. That this had happened despite her vigilance meant that her strength must have suddenly increased without her realizing.

At least her growth did not affect her appearance. Our sister Three's hair grows at an incredible rate, so much so that she must constantly be cutting it. As a result, she travels with a pair of scissors wherever she goes. Then there is Four and her nails; unlike hair which at least doesn't hurt when it is cut, Four is constantly suffering

from her nails splitting and breaking. She long had a habit of biting them to keep them down, and struggled greatly to stop doing it. The subject is still a sensitive one for her, and it's sad to see her always trying to hide her hands. Our youngest sister Five is just the opposite, taking inordinate pride in her ever-expanding bust. Four would always be muttering that such large breasts on one so young was vulgar and disturbing, but I wonder if she wasn't also jealous, if not of Five's chest than of her bravado. Seeing Five take such pride in her assets must be very frustrating for her.

"One, what should I do...?" Two's voice brought me back to the present.

"Don't be concerned. It was a very old door, ready to come off its hinges. I'll have someone fix it."

"Really?"

"Really." Two's smile returned in an instant. Her guileless nature remained unchanged from childhood.

"Well! It's nice to see you, Sis! I hope you've been well. It's been such a long time..." Actually, it hadn't. Not much time had passed since we'd suppressed a noble uprising together with her disciple.

"...ha ha. I guess it's only felt like a long time, hasn't it, Cent?" The man beside her nodded. He had a habit of running flipping his jet black hair that struck me as looking very affected, but Two didn't seem to mind. In fact, she was completely taken in by her him, her disciple. Yes... every Intoner must have a disciple, who lives to serve and protect her.

"Are we the first ones here?" When I told her yes, Two's eyes lit up.

"You hear that, Cent? We made it first! Isn't that great?"

"Why, you always come first in my eyes, Lady Two..."

"Aww, Cent... you come first to me, too! I love you most in the whole wide world!" Two proclaimed with blushing cheeks. This was the way these two usually carried on. While it could be embarrassing to watch, I felt an Intoner and her disciple being linked by a strong bond of love was ideal.

...that said, if I left them undisturbed for too long they'd start getting overly affectionate, so I cut in.

"How do things fare in the Desert Country?"

"O-oh yeah! There was this huge minotaur nest, but we got rid of it!"

I'd meant how the nobility there were handling having been stripped of their privilege and whether she had reason to believe they were plotting something, but instead Two briefed me on her hunting monsters, offering shelter to misplaced people and maintaining a steady food supply. Well, I suppose if this was all she had to discuss it was safe to assume there wasn't anything to worry about. The Desert Country is made up of just that, lifeless desert. Very little can be grown there and the lives of the people are hard. I had given Two the task of governing with the hopes she could lift their spirits with her optimistic nature. Having heard that she was well-loved by her people, with the soldiers in her employ ready to lay down their lives for her, I realized my judgment had not been mistaken.

"Say, would you mind if Cent and I inspected the cathedral to make sure it's safe while we're here? I'm sure you don't." Before I could reply Two had already turned on her heel. I remembered she had wanted to do the same thing when she was here a half year ago, but didn't have the time to. I suppose she wouldn't let the opportunity escape her now. It really impressed me, how little her character had changed over the years. Her disciple gave me a bow before following her out, and I returned to my books.

The reason I was holed up in here wasn't just because it was quiet. I was looking for something. I don't know who gathered them, but this library was full of books from all over the world; one of them must hold the information I seek. I wanted an answer to my dearest question: What are the Intoners, and why do they exist?

February 14th

My sister Four and her disciple Decadus arrived much sooner than I'd expected, given the Mountain Country is furthest from the capital.

"I invited Three to travel with us, but she was so busy with her dolls she turned us down." Four said with an exaggerated sigh. The Forest Country Three presided over neighbored Four's domain.

"That's just her way. Don't take it personally." Rather than having been turned down, it was more likely Four had been flat-out ignored. Three was the strangest of us sisters, with a love of dolls stemming back from childhood. Once she became focused on making her own no one's words could reach her. She even forgets to eat and sleep; she probably hadn't even noticed Four was there.

"More importantly..."

"You'd like a report on my country, correct?"

"You are quick on the uptake as always, Four." Four's expression beamed with pride, and she began to brief me on the status of the Mountain Country.

"Everything is going smoothly. I mean, how could it not? The population isn't that large and the livable portion of land is rather compact. The former lord must have been a true dimwit to make such a mess of things." That was correct. If the Mountain Country hadn't been so easy to govern, I'd never have entrusted it to Four. Four is serious and intelligent, but rather immature. Faced with difficulty, she either recedes into her shell or spectacularly loses her temper. There was no way I could rely on her to deal with anything potentially overwhelming.

"It's not the Mountain Country that worries me. Tell me about the Forest Country?" There was a reason behind Four's visit to Three, and that was because I had requested she go take stock of Three's land on her way here. Truthfully, I'd been worried; assigning Three to govern there had been a gamble on my part.

"Surprisingly, she seems to be managing well! It's enough to make me re-evaluate my opinion of her. I can't imagine having to deal with those awful Faeries or those snobby elves." The majority of the people residing in the forest were not human. It was home to faeries and secluded elf villages. But that's exactly why I thought Three would fare best there.

Non-humans generally do not take well to humans encroaching on them. The key to coexistence with them is to give them ample space to themselves. The previous lord had tried instead to exert control over them, which hadn't gone well. Three, who had no drive, would not make the same mistake. Also, it was a load off my mind having her in a place where not many had to deal with her. The fewer, the better...

"One?"

"Ah. Excuse me, it's nothing. Go on."

"That's all there is to say! There are no problems in either my country or Three's. With the wicked lords gone, the people lead happy lives. This past harvest was the first they'd ever have in which the fruits of their labor were not immediately robbed from their hands."

"That's good to hear. Thank you." But though she had just told me there was no more to say, Four lingered.

"What is it?" I could clearly tell she had something she wanted to tell me.

"Are we really... going to fight her?"

"That's why I called for you all," I said firmly, but Four continued, albeit timidly.

"I don't see any point in such a battle..."

"Then you'd have us all killed?"

"No... of course not!"

"But that's what not fighting would mean." Four cast her eyes downward dejectedly.

"One... you've changed..."

"I don't doubt it. But so have we all." Of course we had. We were no longer children. We had to change, if only to keep a hold on our Intoner powers which grew in strength each day. I've forgotten, now... how old were we when we realized something was wrong with our bodies?

Why do we possess this power? To maintain the order of the world; I'd known this since I was a child. But how did I know it? Who taught that to me? Four looked unsatisfied, but silently took her leave. Her disciple, Decadus, followed after her like a shadow. Their eyes had not met once the entire time they were in the room. Perhaps Four disliked having an older, mild-mannered man as her disciple. In comparison to Two, she was quite cold. But I noticed that Decadus himself did not seem to mind her treatment. It could be that in itself frustrated Four even more.

As soon as I could no longer hear the sound of their steps, I resumed my reading. I had not once let up on my research, yet I'd still been unable to find a scrap of information on Intoners... or disciples, for that matter. Perhaps my way of looking had been flawed. It could be that we were not always referred to as Intoners, but by another name. But there is no way existences as powerful as we would not be recorded. Take our songs, for instance. They were nothing like the usual practice of chanting words to cast magic, and sure to pique the interest to a wizard. Yet none of the tomes on sorcery made any mention of us.

Why can't I find anything? Was the existence of Intoners being purposefully omitted? Had someone wished to censor any mention of us? If so, why?

February 22nd

"Two told me Three isn't here yet. And here I was sure we'd be the last to arrive!" Five said, tilting her head to the side. I wasn't surprised. I knew the last one here would either be Three or Five; Three due to being wrapped up in her doll making and Five due to surely putting off her departure until the last minute on account of her domain being closest to mine.

"That's why I told you we didn't need to hurry!" Said Five's disciple. As long as he kept his mouth shut, he was a boy of astounding beauty, but as soon as it opened it was all for naught. I believe Four once dubbed him a cheeky little brat. I was of a similar opinion.

"Five, you never listen to a word I say!"

"Why, that's just not true."

"It is so. Take last night, for instance. I kept telling you I was tired, and you still-" I cleared my throat, not caring to hear any more of what the disciple was going to say.

"Let's keep things short. How are things in the Ocean Country?" Of all the territories, the corrupt lords had the tightest grip on the Ocean Country. Most of the rich and influential nobles resided there, and those who remained hated us intensely for robbing them of what they considered rightly theirs. Of course, their wealth had never belonged to them; they had robbed it from the people. We had merely returned it to its rightful owners.

In any case, of all the places a potential uprising might occur, the Ocean Country ranked first. I had feared governing it would prove difficult for Five, but apparently, my fears were unfounded.

"You needn't fret. I've long since made all those naughty nobles my slaves." Five said with a giggle and a wink.

"Five has to own people body and soul, after all..." Her disciple said with a grimace.

Ever since she was small, Five couldn't stand not getting what she wanted. As a result, she'd grown quite forceful about obtaining things. Be it an object or a person, Five would not rest until they were hers completely. This greediness often repelled others, but it seemed to be serving her well in regards to taking control over the entire country.

"And how goes the reconstruction of the harbors?" During our battle with the lord there, we had accidentally laid waste to most of the seafront. It was difficult to keep our powers in check while fighting, even though he tried to be careful. That was just how strong we had grown.

"Well. Trading ships from the East have begun coming into port."

"And that made Five very happy. She exchanged all her diamonds for what the Eastern merchants had to sell." The previous lord had been a woman, and her castle was full of extravagant dresses and jewels which Five quickly claimed for herself. While they ought to have gone to the people, I let Five do as she pleased because I was also well aware of her tendency to grow bored with things. No matter how driven she might have been in pursuing something, her satisfaction upon obtaining it was never long-lived and soon she'd discard it.

True to form, Five had grown tired of the treasures within the castle and had deemed to replace them with something new. And she'd repeat this process time and time again, I was sure. But now her fickleness would stimulate the country's trade.

Output was low in the Ocean Country as it did not have many natural resources. There was a fishing industry, but that was not enough to support all the people in there. Only through commerce and trade could it prosper.

"Not just the gems, I sold all the dresses, too. The busts on them had grown too tight for me, after all. My bountiful bosom still seems to be growing." I saw Five's disciple give his shoulders a distasteful shrug at her words. On his face was a spiteful grin that was much at odds with the rest of his delicate features.

"Say that in front of Four and she'll have your head!" He warned Five, which I found ironic considering how he himself said things to anger Four just as frequently. I didn't see the point in voicing this, however.

Two's muscles had grown stronger. Four had been wearing gauntlets which hid her hands, but going by the incessant clacking of her clippers, I could surmise her nails were growing as fast as ever. Of course, I was painfully aware of my ever-sharpening senses; even here in the library as I was beginning to be able to pick up sounds from the outside. And here Five was telling me her cup size had increased yet again. Would these twisted transformations continue to increase alongside our powers? As a child, I had prayed for strength... yet now I feared how strong we might become.

"I understand. Thank you for your report."

Saying I had work to return to, I turned my back on them. I wasn't lying; I was eager to return to my search. Even after all the reading I'd done, I'd yet to find anything remotely relating to Intoners. It was beginning to make me very nervous. Fearing I may find nothing in the end, I flipped through the book pages at a hurried pace.

March 3rd

Three arrived exactly on the 'day of promise'.

Deeply frustrated by the fruitlessness of my research, I had been in the library since the crack of dawn, surrounded by texts. Before I registered her footsteps I heard the sound of her scissors snipping. Behind her lazy footfalls sounded the even pace of her disciple Octa.

"What has two legs in the morning, twelve in the afternoon, and one in the evening..." The door creaked open and I was met by Three's questioning face.

"...can you guess?"

"You're late." Was my only reply. There was little point in trying to figure out Three's riddles as they were mostly meaningless. As a child, Three had been very quiet, but since she'd become obsessed with dolls she'd become much more chatty, perhaps as a result of talking to them.

"...has your hair stopped growing?" It had taken me a moment to notice on account of her awful posture, but I realized Three's hair, which usually hung at her waist, was cut short at her shoulders.

"Oh, no. It's that I've been taking care of my lady's hair as of late." Said Octa with a laugh. That explained it looking neater than usual. At first glance, Octa seemed a friendly if a somewhat eccentric old man. Unfortunately, eccentric didn't begin to cover him...

"I see." So it was still growing at the usual rate. Of course it was. Why would Three be an exception?

There was a time in which we needed all the strength we could muster. But after the battle today, what use will our power be? What's the point of it increasing?

"...I'm tired." Three yawned. When not working on her dolls she was extremely lethargic, and these words always preceded her lying on the spot, regardless of her location, to sleep.

"Don't lay on those books. They're antiques, you'll damage them." Three, about to stretch out of a pile of old books, managed to just barely avoid them and lay on the cold floor beside them.

"Why don't you rest in one of the bedrooms?" Traveling from the Forest Country took nearly as long as the journey from the Mountain Country. Surely both she and her disciple were exhausted, and we had nothing to discuss since I'd already heard about the state of her land from Four.

"What's the matter?" I'd expected her to either fall asleep there or leave, but Three did neither. Instead, she was playing with her scissors, expressionless. I could never tell what she was thinking, and I had a feeling her disciple couldn't, either.

And yet... sometimes I was struck by the feeling that perhaps my strange sister knew more than I did. Perhaps she had already long ago grasped the answer to the question I was searching for so desperately...

"I won't sleep."

"But you said you were tired."

"...white." Her inability to hold a normal conversation was also nothing new. I turned to Octa.

"I have work to attend to. If you wouldn't mind taking her..."

"But of course, my la-"

"Atop the leviathan, its scales whiter than snow, a pink blade." Three cut off her disciple with another riddle.

"Three...?"

"Where does the tip of that blade point? ...can you guess?" Three's eyes stared straight into mine. She was no longer talking nonsense; I grasped the meaning of her words. The leviathan with scales whiter than snow... a white dragon, who carried on its back a woman with pink eyes. A woman who pointed her blade toward us... her sisters.

On her way here, Three must have caught sight of the enemy we were to fight this day, as had been promised.

"I suppose I'm out of time." I sighed.

In the end, I couldn't find any mention of Intoners, our songs, our disciples... nothing. My search had been pointless.

"Who is right? Is it you, One? Is it Two... Four... Five? Or... could it actually be Zero?" Three asked with no hint of a smile.

"...all people believe that they are the ones who are right." Or else, how could they fight? No one was strong enough to dedicate themselves to a cause they knew was mistaken. They had to justify it somehow first. My search for an answer had been an attempt to justify my reason for fighting my sister today. Did that mean I doubted myself, my decisions?

"One?" Feeling Three's dubious gaze, I realized I'd been laughing.

It didn't matter whether I had an answer, a justification. Whether I knew what we were or why we existed wouldn't change what I needed to do. I would fight this battle all the same. So what need did I have for doubt?

I closed the book I had been reading and rose from my seat. In the distance, I heard the roar of a dragon. There was no mistaking it. The traitor was upon us.

"Let us meet her head on. Today we fulfill the promise we made."



Drakengard 3 Story Summary

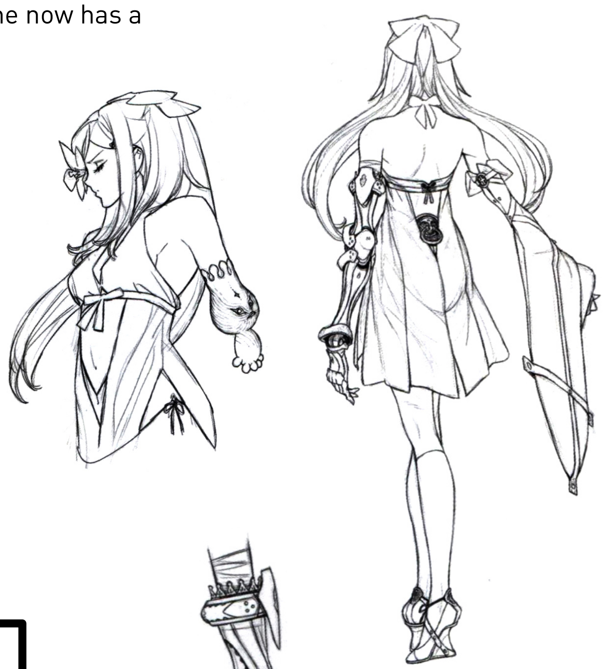
Source translated by Bdouine & Linq, and

The game starts with Partition narrating his glorified story of the Intoners. While still in the middle of his speech, Zero puts an end to his captive misery. Soldiers are shouting from outside the room and soon enough, the room explodes under cannon fire. It is March 3rd, 999, the day Zero returns to Cathedral City to kill her sisters and put an end to the Flower's influence.

Michael is also here, and both are making their way through the capital, in direction of the Cathedral. However, Titans are blocking their progress. Those are not humans nor beasts: there are entities created by the Intoners. Zero and her companion get separated, he stays behind to deal with the opponents. Blood splatters on her white clothes as she cuts through more soldiers. At last, she finally arrives in front of the Cathedral. On the roof, her five sisters are waiting. After exchanging a few words, Two, Three, Four, and Five jump from the building on land in front of the traitor. Enough talk, it's time to fight. The sisters' health quickly depletes; Zero is just more experience. They have essentially lived for only two years, while Zero spent her entire life fighting and killing. While they withdraw, One summons Gabriel, her daemon dragon. He is almost unrecognizable from his former self; only the purple color remains. However, this is bad news for our protagonist. Fighting a dragon is hard, even for an Intoner. This one is even more powerful than Michael. Zero gets blasted by the monster. Upon getting up, she realizes that her left arm is lying on the floor a few meters in front of her. Gabriel powers up for another attack when Michael finally shows up: he tries to attack One directly, but the sisters use their Song Shield ability to stop the beam. Zero and her dragon are blown. Still conscious, she hears Michael speaking his last words: he uses his Last Wish to reincarnate.

One year later, we meet with Zero again. She wakes up from a recurring nightmare; Michael... It's always Michael leaving her and she can never catch up with him. Anyway, not much has changed in the world in the last year. The Intoners are even more worship than before, as they control every aspect of Midgard.

Zero took refuge in the Land of Sea, at an abandoned cottage. She now has a mechanical arm, animated by a parasite that is inside it. During the year, she healed herself and prepared for her sororicide slaughter. Outside, Mikhail is rolling in the mud.



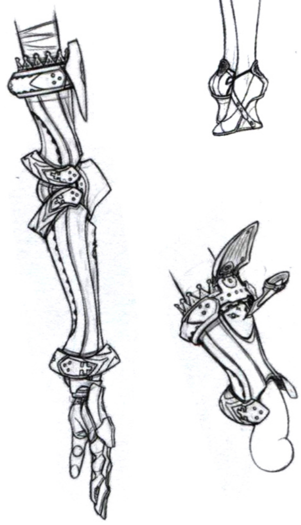
Zero is fed up by Mikhail childish behavior, fed up for having to wait so long, for getting off on the wrong foot, and probably in broader terms, for having to live another day in this world she hates. She is eager to finish this job, and thus, today is the day.

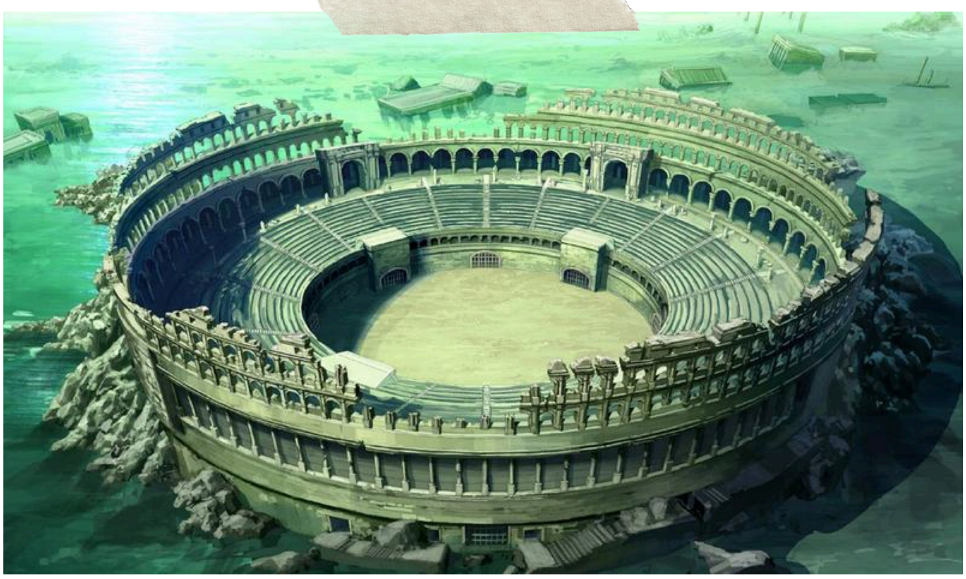
She stays on land while Mikhail is tasked with sinking a nearby battleship. Unlike other dragons, he is not prideful nor arrogant. His very young age gives him an innocence like no one else. That's why he feels bad about killing people, and even more Zero's sisters.

YOKO FACT 1

Why Zero's flower isn't present in Chapter 0?

For no real reason apparently. Maybe the developers thought it would be easier to distinguish the passing of time by having her appearance change that way. Zero is shown with a Flower before Chapter 0 in her DLC Story, so for consistency, it should have been present.





Back into action. Zero makes her way toward the Shrine of Seas, killing every soldier, spearman, and archer confronting her. When she arrives at the shore, a Gigas is waiting there for her. Those rather intimidating monsters are actually really slow; Zero can dodge its every swing and strike it in the back. The Gigas taken care of, she enters the no longer Sunken City. Mikhail is taking his sweet time to deal with the battleship. Pissed at her dragon's ineptitude, she decides to ride him and order him properly. Once the ship in sunken, she carefully looks around in search of the Colosseum.



They land inside the arena where Five and her disciple Dito are waiting. The Intoner use The Power of Songs to summon her Watcher: Phanuel. Water rushes inside the arena and quickly fills it to better accommodate the neon golden crab. It stays submerge and occasionally arises to blast our protagonist with high-pressure water jets. Just after its attack, Mikhail strikes at the aquatic creature and sends it into the stands. It lays on its back, giving the dragon plenty of time to burn its soft abdomen. At least, Zero uses her Intoner mode while still mounted, and gives it the final blow.

Five in on the floor. Even after having stabbed her a dozen times, she still gets up. Her disciple is the one to finish her. He wasn't a big fan of Five, to say the least. With that taken care of, Dito joins our team.

Read more about Five and Dito in their respective novellas on pages 59 and 86, or maybe Five's memory on page 65.

Prophecy

A poem stated in Chapter 1. Each stanza represents a segment of the game.

A thirstful whore
with lips agasm
Her web unspundled,
left to blight

A fortrace drowning
in the blasm
Her walls vansieged
by falseful mite

An anvil tyed
by lock and lash
Her works abounding
like the hare

An icy love
by fire knashed
Her tears for him
a dulcy aere

A farewell kiss
from lealfast drake
Her end a cork
pulled from the wine

Which falls in
gemel angels' wake
And reddens this,
our dearthly stein

Or will the flower
splay her flaps
Contract and birth
a world defaced?

Or will her thornish
sword be snapt
The flower broken
for the vase?

Or will the songstyr
dance and scend
A eulogy beneath
her boots?

The world will meet
a tangled end
Betwixt its voul,
labrynthin roots



One sister down, only four more to go!

Traveling in the Land of Mountains is much harder than what our group is used to: the rocky trails that keep going up and down, when they are not simply impassable. The dry, cold, breeze. The soldiers hiding in the crevasses or the numerous cannons they are using. Or even more frustrating is the fact that nobody knows where Four is hiding in this vast region of Midgard. Mountain Fortress might be an obvious choice; after all, this is where the Lord of the Land is supposed to be living. However, our next victim isn't as stupid as Five and she probably already heard of her sister's fate.

Nonetheless, our group has no other clue to follow. At the very least, the Fortress might give them some indication on Four's location.

Four's side of the story

After proclaiming to destroy the world, Four summons Zophiel, dancing away while laughing maniacally. Zero is surprised by the Watcher being a dragon, shortly before Four rides it and commences battle. After defeating the daemon, Zero duels with Four, the latter Intoner having succumbed to madness and announcing that she would like to follow in Zero's footsteps as an Intoner killer.

Following their battle, a rabid Four is taken aback when Zero strangles her and desperately asks Zero why she decided to do this. Zero subsequently stabs her in the throat, finally killing her once and for all as Mikhail consumes her corpse, leaving her severed glove behind. In a festival of magic lights, the dragon transformed himself: his horns grow, his scales thicken, his wings expand, and his claws become sharper. These new features give Mikhail a more dangerous and ferocious appearance.

Read more about Four's last thoughts in her memory Let Me Tell You, on page 67.

Five's side of the story





In the aftermath of the campaign against the warlords, Two and her chosen disciple Cent continued to defeat monsters across the world, and took in orphaned children from the various regions. While they did this, Cent and Two became more and more enamored of each other. Traveling to the Cathedral City to take the children for a picnic, the pair found that the city's soldiers have been turned into undead by some form of curse. The two reluctantly fought their way through to the crypts, where the children had been hiding under the care of soldiers assigned by Cent. They eventually discovered that Cent's soldiers had also been infected and were forced to kill them, further upsetting Two. When they arrived, they find a monstrous Homonculus who had absorbed all the children. As she fought the beast, Two gradually loses control of her, entering a catatonic state.

Almost a year after this terrible battle, Two finally “regains” consciousness.

He kills her and goes on to search for Zero. He wants to join her, with the shared goal of eliminated the Flower.

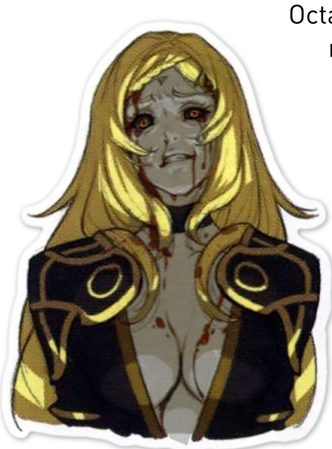
With Five and Four dead, the next target will be Three. Our group needs to travel towards the Land of Forest, an inhospitable place filled with non-human creatures. Three has little control over her territory for this reason. But more importantly, she really doesn't care about protecting her borders, her obsession with dolls taking most of her free time.

Zero isn't sure on the direction to take through all those mountains, but Decadus knows a secret path. After following his lead for a few days, they are shocked: in front of them, the Land of Sand stretches to the horizon. Zero is disappointed, the disciple probably got his share of "punishments" afterward. Anyway, at the very least, the Land of Forest isn't too far from here and traveling in the desert is much more comfortable.

They bump into Cent, walking aimlessly. They talk a little. Without the disciple saying it directly, Zero comes to the conclusion that Two is dead. He ends up joining the group.

Cent's expression troubles her. "I don't know anything about the relationship between the Intoners and their disciple." She thought to herself. Although the Intoner's personality is based on her, it seems they are able to experience a wide range of emotion and relation, some of them which are totally unknown to her.

Our group finally arrives in the Land of Forest. Halfway toward the Forest Shrine, they meet with Octa, Three's disciple. He cherishes carnal pleasure more than anything, and Three's obsession doesn't bring him much sexy time with the Intoner. It is the main reason he deserted her, that, and the weird experiments she is doing on living soldiers. Zero now possesses all the disciples.



Octa guides them in the Forest where they met all kinds of non-human races, followed by reanimated corpses and Ogres: it is interesting to note that Ogres doesn't exist as a naturally occurring species and instead are products of Three's experimentation. One is not very pleased by this initiative and ordered her to cease and destroy them entirely.

Our group arrives at a glade outlined by giant yellow flowers. In front of them, an undead Five is waiting. She walks with difficulties swigging left and right as she summons Galgaliel. Five's appearance is disgraceful and putrid; exactly what Dito is fond of. He walks in front of her and renews his loyalty to his former Intoner. He then proceeds to summon Phanuel.

Cent counters by summoning Egregori. While those two Watchers fight each other, Dito asks to Cent if he would like to join him, believing that he hates this world as much as himself. Cent agrees to the latter, however, he declines the offer. None of this will bring back Lady Two.

Five is falling apart as Zero is striking her from all directions. She tries to save herself by crawling away, but Zero finish her and thus Galgaliel.

Back to the disciples, Cent finds himself lighting up. Same goes for Dito, he looks very confused and almost frightens. Zero explains that Disciples are not supposed to summon a Watcher without the power of an Intoner. If they do, they will use their entire energy and revert to their original form. Dito is distraught, the world he was longing is slipping through his fingers. As he desperately approaches Zero, he changes back to a dove and flies away. Cent is also transforming, but he is much more peaceful: this circumstance isn't too bad after all. Living without Lady Two was excruciating and turning into a dove lets him keep his promise in some sense.







Zero's thoughts

With Five finally dead, it's time to meet with Three. Mikhail senses the Intoner's power nearby in the air. Having no other lead, she mounts him and ascends toward her target. Three is sitting on a magical platform hanged by dragons. She summons Ezrael, an ancient dragon. Zero tries to check if Three is still sane or she was consumed by the Flower's Power. Her response is quite strange but once again, Three has always been kind of weird. The fight begins: Mikhail is trying his hardest but the ancient dragon is capable of teleporting, making it very hard to hit. Fortunately, something is coming to Zero's side to help her: it's Decadus! He was propelled in the air by Octa—though we don't know how... OH!...Oh... Never mind, you don't really want to know anyway do you? Well, Decadus is here to help. He proposes to use his ability to summon Armaros, despite knowing the consequences. Zero and the disciple exchange some words. She shows him a softer side of hers and a genuine smile. He starts singing the incantation: "*this is not a punishment, it's MY reward*" he thinks as he turns into a dove.

The smile has faded from Zero's face. Back to business. Thanks to Decadus' sacrifice, the time has slowed down significantly in the area. It is far easier to aim and hit the ancient dragon, and he is no longer able to use its teleportation trick. Ezrael and Mikhail both charge up their special beam cannons for a final, decisive coup de grace... To Mikhail's advantage, his target is roughly ten times larger than himself, and thus, he is not able to evade in time. The Watcher is dead, and Three falls as the magical platform is no longer there to support her.

Zero and Mikhail come back on foot, followed by Octa. They find the Intoner, still alive. As her former disciple, Octa tries to reason with her, saying that this fight needs to stop. She laughs and uses her magic to subjugate Octa, forcing him to summon Armisael. However, she was too confident and careless: he was able to free himself from her stranglehold, before summoning the Watcher on his own.
Of course he will disappear, but he has successfully overturned the situation.

Three's final thoughts

One's side of the story



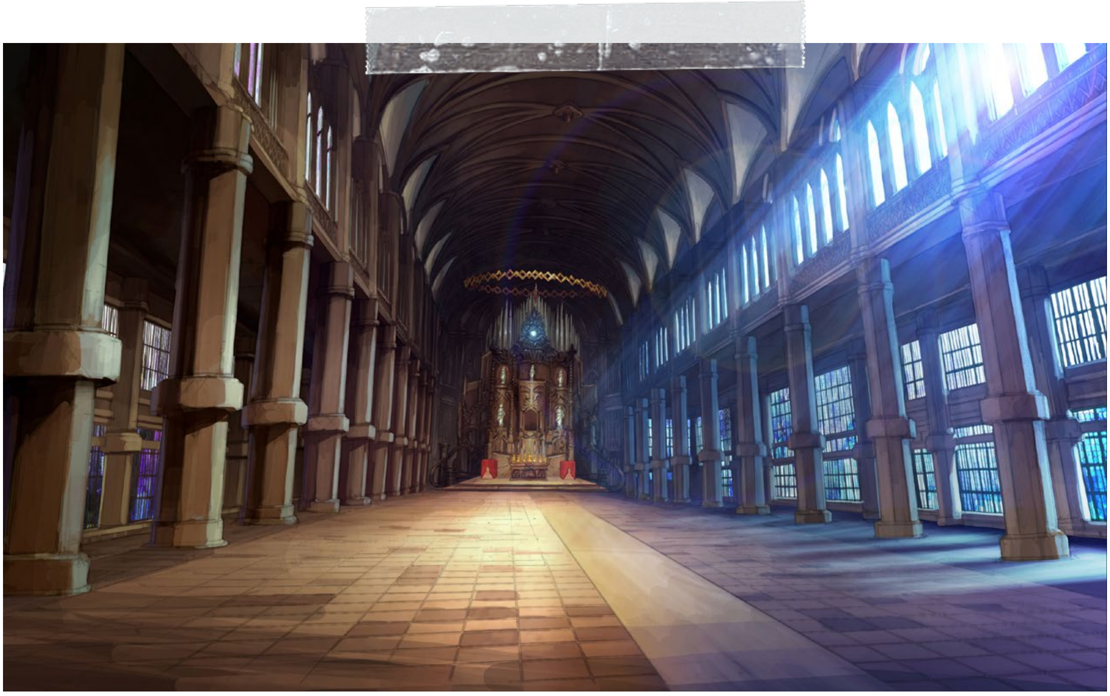
With all the Disciples returned to their original form, the campfire is much quieter. Zero and her dragon are alone once more. After having eaten Three, Mikhail has evolved again: he looks very similar to Michael, despite still having the same high-pitch voice and optimistic mentality. Zero is conflicted by the dragon's appearance: seeing him sharing the same look, she can't take it. It's too much to see "him" again. "It won't be long before you eat me too..." she thought.

Mikhail has a real lack of subtlety, however, he has definitely noticed that Zero was in pain. Her breathing is irregular, the way she is clenching her fists, or that her entire body is tense: all are hints for Mikhail to worry. He asks if the flower in her eye is painful. She replies that her wellbeing is nothing to be concerned about. "Will you kill me after all this... as you promised?" He agrees.

Zero and Mikhail arrive at Cathedral City. The ruined city will be the meeting place for the final battle. Cathedral City is just as mysterious as its Intoner: the Intoners' personalities are fragments of Zero's own. The latter was able to broadly pin down the reasoning behind each sister's action, all except One. She spends her time in the Cathedral's library, looking for information about the Intoners. She is an enigma, Zero never had a strong sense of justice, nor did she ever tried to understand the world around her.

Mikhail senses One's Power, which is unusual: she normally hides her own presence using her powerful magic. Is it an invitation, or perhaps a provocation? They are intercepted by the Intoner and her daemon dragon Gabriel. Zero realizes that her sister's senses are heightened as always; she heard every word she told Mikhail along the way. Zero asks to One if she tried to create a Disciple for herself. She denies it, saying that she does not need some pitiful minion by her side. Zero is still convinced that One has a Disciple, but whatever, let's finish this.

The dragons fight each other, with their respective Intoners on their back. One plays a dirty trick by summoning an army of Imps, while retreating toward the Cathedral.



800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500



The Intoners' personalities

As we have seen before, the flower created the five Intoners, copies of Zero. Each received a fragment of Zero's powers. Furthermore, the Flower absorbed the memories of the five girls inside Zero's prison cell and used those as the basis for the Intoners' false memories. Each one of them also inherited a part of Zero's personality (it is unclear if Zero lost those traits or they were copied). Physically, they are all based on women Zero encountered during her life. Also, they all wear a piece of apparel shared with Zero.

ONE



One is Rose in her final moments: she is unsatisfied, and doesn't comprehend why the world is so unjust. She hates wrongdoers, corrupt, and oppressors. One is the embodiment of Zero's desire for a just and logical world.

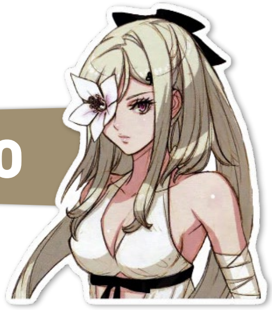
Personality: Strong sense of justice, seriousness, and intelligence. She feels a severe responsibility towards the well-being of others. She is very curious, and is looking for answers. After Gabriella's transformation, she became rather untalkative and would never smile again.

Memories: Growing together with her six sisters.

Body: That dying girl with her eyes gouged from torture that Zero knew. She has the same voice and hair, probably the same eyes.

Apparel: She shares Zero's outfit color scheme (predominantly white with black).

ZERO



Personality:

Zero has a violent disposition and is easily irritated, having no tolerance for anything complicated or repetitive. She doesn't have much care for her own appearance, and has little regard for her health due to her ultimate fate. Often apathetic and bitter, she is prone to scoffing at anyone or anything which distracts from her main objective. Her haughtiness is occasionally mocked and played for laughs, especially when she appears to be confident in herself.

Michael was the only being Zero had trusted. The two partners were close and understood one another well. Zero is haunted by her dreams of their time together after his death. She initially feels emotionally detached from Mikhail and refuses to call him by name. Over the course of their adventure, however, Zero's feelings for him soften as she instructs and relies on him. She eventually becomes attached to him with maternal endearment.

It is revealed that Zero's haughty demeanor masks her guilty conscience, with her inner-monologues self-deprecating at times. She blames herself for bringing the Intoners upon the world and laments on the consequences of her other actions, such as the loss of her disciples when they revert back to doves. Zero routinely reflects on how her sisters represent aspects of her own personality, eventually coming to realize that they collectively represent her hatred of the world as a result of many years of abuse. When she decides to save Mikhail by forging a pact with him, she feels as though she is doing it out of selfish reasons since the flower will also survive by using Mikhail as a host. Zero's lack of self-worth comes full circle when she is finally killed by Brother One, explaining in a monologue that her death was something she had always looked forward to.



TWO

Two is what Zero could have been like had her life been different... she could have learned to love the world and be carefree...and find true love herself.

Personality: Two is a bright and cheerful young girl who can get along with just about anyone. She likes to express her feelings even to someone who isn't special to her. Two is very motherly, being very considerate of her subjects and thinking of them as her family.

Memories: Fond memories of her loving and kind parents.

Body: Details unknown.

Apparel: She and Zero have a flower as design ornament (on her hair, while Zero's is in her right eye).



Zero speculates that Three is a wild, selfish, and twisted facet of herself. She killed so many people when all she needed was their food. She had no remorse and no empathy, just like when Three is experimenting with soldiers.

Personality: Three is listless, lethargic, and has a dangerous temperament. She is paranoid, delusional, and obsesses endlessly over the things she gets fixated on. She possesses a lazy disposition, going as far as to serve food uncooked because of her perennial laziness. She is surprisingly intelligent but rather innocent and cruel.

Memories: Disliked her parents.

Body: Details unknown.

Apparel: She shares the same hair clip with Zero (located at the exact same place, above their left eye).



Four reminds Zero of herself as a young girl who was thrown into the brothel and how she tried to hold on to the smallest bits of pride (self-importance) she still had left. Four is also the embodiment of her wish to be accepted and loved by others. When Four became paranoid, she rejected everyone in her life, hating the entire world, just like Zero when she stopped trusting anyone.

Personality: Four speaks and acts with grace and has the refined personality of a good and responsible listener. However, behind her prim and stiff personality hides a twisted inferiority complex. She is jealous of her sisters' beauty and craves for One's praise and acknowledgment. She also has a discriminate attitude to non-human species.

Memories: Hated her parents. She has memories of a happy childhood with a kind and gentle Zero. She remembers Zero holding her and staying with her while she would cry because of boys that bullied her.

Body: Details unknown.

Apparel: She shares an armored left arm with Zero.



Five embodies Zero's huge lustful issues and insensitivity towards sexual topics. Five and Zero would kill without any remorse or empathy, just to get some food (although Zero was doing this to survive whereas Five is doing this to satisfy her wanton interests in weird ingredients).

Personality: Crude and horny. Five has great confidence, greed, and relentless cravings. The moment she obtains what she desires however, she loses interest. She speaks slovenly and loves to allude to her sex life filled with many, many lovers, who are either men, women, or both.

Memories: Has memories of her father who had sadly passed away.

Body: One of the nuns Zero killed in an Abbey, back when she was stealing food to survive. Probably why she uses a weapon resembling a cross.

Apparel: She shares a similar shoulder decoration (albeit differently colored) with Zero.

Two's Novella – Today's Meal

From Drakengard 3 Official English Website (no longer exists)

"Is there anything I can help you with, Lady Two?"

"Aw, Cent, you called me 'Lady Two.' You promised me that you'd—"

I was about to say, "call me Two when we're alone," but I stopped myself short. It can't be helped; Cent must be proper and refer to me as "Lady Two" when others are around. But he leaves out the "Lady" part when we're all alone. We made that promise a while ago. That's why Cent's been calling me "Two" lately. As long as we're alone. But he said "Lady" just now. That means...

I stop pouring water into the cooking pot and about-face! Then I rush toward the entrance to the kitchen. I hear some footsteps running. And not just one set, but multiple. I catch a glance of the ones running away and see that they're the chefs.

"I knew it."

So Cent referred to me as "Lady Two" since he knew everyone was peeking.

"Oooh! I told you I'd be fine by myself! Why can't you trust me?"

A large hand gently touches my cheek as I pout. Then I notice Cent's gorgeous face in front of mine.

"You can't blame them, now can you? After all, you are a precious Intoner to everyone in this land."

Ah! My cheeks light on fire at the touch of his hand. What should I do? I can't stop blushing. And he's not giving me time to think.

"But obviously, no one in this world cares for you as deeply as I."

I can't take it! My heart's about to burst!

What should I do? What should I do? What should I do!?

"Two?"

How can Cent be so handsome? He's not only handsome, but he's kind, too. And he tells us all these funny stories. But when we're alone... Yeee!

"Two? Are you feeling all right, my dear? It might be best to lie down in the bedroom."

The bedroom? D-Don't say another word! Yeee! Yeee! Yeee!

"Why don't we take a break from cooking for the moment..."

That reminds me of something important.

"No! I have to cook today!"

Calm down, calm down! I have to cook for Cent today! It'll be a dinner for us the two of us! I've been preparing for this for two whole weeks! Breathe, breathe...

"Then, may I lend a hand?"

"Absolutely not! I won't allow it! You can't look, either! Where's the fun if you know what I'm making?"

Oooh, but...

"...But it'd be nice if you could stick around, just to keep me company."

"As you wish, my lady."

Ack! He's giving me that cute smile of his! That's so unfair! How am I supposed to concentrate!? ...Breathe. I need to breathe... Calm down. Okay, I'm okay. I take a couple more breaths and then tap my cheeks.

"All right! I'm in the groove! Cent, take a seat over there."

I point to the chair in the corner, trying not to look at Cent's face as much as possible. Can you blame me? My heart would start pounding again if I looked at his face! All right, then. Back to cooking.

"Rrragh!"

I place the water-filled pot on the counter. Then I cast my spell. The magical glyph glows and ignites a fire that engulfs the pot. I don't know how, but this counter seems to have been used for some sort of ceremony. I suppose that shouldn't be a surprise. This room wasn't a kitchen when we first got here; this whole place was actually a shrine—not the most accommodating of places.

But my sister One gave me orders to "rule over the Land of Sands and protect the shrine," so I decided to live in it! Living in the shrine was the most convenient option, after all. I mean, I didn't have to worry about building a new house! Though I did have to redecorate the place a bit. To spruce it up, you know?

For instance, there was this room with lots of old books and scrolls, so I had the books taken out and made it into a bedroom. There was tons of dust, but I cleaned the place thoroughly and scrubbed the floor spotless, so it's really nice now.

I put up some wallpaper with small flowers on it. There was a kilt with a similar pattern, so I turned that into the bedcover. Then I placed a table with carved legs next to the bed for a nightstand and placed a vase with flowers on it. I always wanted a cute room, you know.

The only thing missing are some adorable curtains, but this shrine's underground, so there aren't any windows... Still, it's a comfortable place to live in. It's cool inside when it's hot outside, and when it's cold outside, it's nice and warm here. I bet whoever built this shrine had the extreme weather in mind when designing the place. Although it is annoying to need candles on all the time to get any light down here, even during the day.

Another perk of living underground is that food doesn't spoil easily. I made this ceremony room into a kitchen and I didn't even have to make a storage area for food! But I still need to make sure that our supplies are kept away from heat.

Oh, and I wanted to eat with all the soldiers and neighbors, so I made the really laaarge area in the middle into a dining hall by placing a bunch of chairs and tables there. Food always tastes better when you're eating with a large group. right?

But I thought it'd be nice to have dinner alone with Cent, even if it was just once in a while. So, that's why I decided to cook today. I gave all the chef and servants the day off. Everyone needs some time off to relax.

> "Here we go. The veggies have all been prepped. so I need to get the meat ready."

> "Two, is that tro—"

> "Yes, it's troll. I skinned it and cut it up into chunks, I'm going to stew it with some herbs. Oh, I made sure to drain the blood so there's nothing to worry about. Rrraght!"

I use a sword to cleave the joint. Troll bones are super tough, so normal knives won't do. They chip too easily. Luckily, only the bones are hard. The meat is actually nice and soft. That's why you can use troll meat for various dishes and not just stews. You can fry it, or you can cut it into thin slices and boil it, or even batter and deep-fry it. Pickling the meat and then storing it in a barrel will let it hold for six months, too! It's such a great way to preserve food!

The only problem is that trolls are pretty heavy, so it's difficult to work with the meat unless you're strong. I think that's why more people don't know that troll meat is so useful. Of course, I'm sure we'd see more of it if troll pelts had any kind of value...but they smell so awful that no one wants them.

> "A whole troll might be too much for the two of us... Grrragh!"

I rub some salt and wine into the meat once I cut it into chunks. Removing the tendons is quite a chore, but it's also a lot of fun. I love cooking.

> "It's wonderful to have a place to cook whenever I feel like it."

We hardly stopped anywhere with a proper kitchen when we were traveling. It was mostly cooking meat or fish over an open fire, and that's it.

We'd occasionally come across an empty house with a kitchen. And by occasionally, I mean rarely. But it always brought a smile to my face when we did and I always insisted that the cook take the day off so that I could prepare a meal for everyone.

> "By the way, who's the best cook amongst the Intoners?"

> "That would definitely be One."

"And not you?"

I think about Cent's question for a second. I definitely enjoy cooking the most, but One's the best cook. There's no doubt about it. That being said...

"No, One's the best. But if you asked her, I'm sure she'd tell you that anyone could do what she does."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, she thinks that the basics of cooking are so easy that even a child could do it. She just can't understand how someone could mess up such a simple task."

"I see. So Lady One believes that cooking comes naturally. However, cooking is not comprised of just the basics."

"She said you can apply the basics to anything if you give it a little thought."

The problem is that "just a little thought" for One is thinking up a storm for most other people.

"What about Lady Three? She's skilled in handling blades, isn't she?"

"I guess you could call them blades, but Three's specialty is scissors."

There are scissors specifically for cooking, but Three's scissors aren't really for that. I think there was a time where she used them to cut open a fish, and the fish ended up all mangled. But then One used a rock to grind the fish. She then rolled out the fish meat and broiled it. It was so delicious! She then reminded us that it's simply *impossible* to mess up cooking.

"On top of that, Three doesn't seem to like tampering with things much. She's the type that likes to enjoy the natural flavor of a dish. Like enjoying fresh ingredients the way they are.

"...It sounds like she's just lazy."

"Hmmm... I guess you could say that."

We were always given vegetables whole if Three was in charge of cooking. I think Three just never was interested in cooking.

"Oh, but Four did say that you shouldn't overcook vegetables. If you do, then you'd lose a lot of nutrients."

I think she said that veggies found above ground should be left uncooked, while veggies taken from the ground *should* be. That's why it's better to ear fruits and leafy greens raw while it's better to boil or cook onions and potatoes. At least, according to Four.

"She also said that it's best to have a meat-to-vegetable ratio of one-to-two. And that it's better to eat fruits in the mornings and to eat fish at least twice a week."

I think she also said that using sugar and salt too much isn't good, either. The food was always bland whenever Four was in charge of cooking. I guess it can't be helped. I mean, when Four cooked, Five would pour salt on without even tasting the food, saying, "This is just the right amount for your dishes, my dear sister."

"But you know, it's because of her understanding of food that Four's cooking makes you feel really healthy It's almost medicinal."

"It sounds like her food is just overly bland."

"Uhhh... I guess you could say that."

But her cooking is perfect if you're sick. You could eat whatever she made even if you had an upset stomach. I remember a time when we stayed with a farmer and Four cooked dinner to show our thanks. The grandma was so happy. She said that there were so many things she couldn't eat because of her old age. But she ate everything that Four made that night.

"How is Lady Five's cooking?"

Five's cooking is the complete opposite of Four's. Whereas Four's cooking is perfect for sick people, only the fittest can handle Five's cooking. It's like you need courage to eat it!"

Five loves really spicy meat and oily foods. She'd use a ton of sugar or salt while cooking, too. Four would always complain that there weren't enough greens in Five's cooking or that it was too rich. Five also loves

exotic foods. She'd toss in plenty of herbs or mushrooms that she found into her dishes. Even grotesque-looking ingredients were fair game. I'm more open to various foods now because of Five... Who would have thought insects could be so tasty if they're prepared right?

The thing is, Five doesn't care at all if something's unhealthy or dangerous. I remember a time when she made a stew with fish and mushrooms. We all got horribly sick after eating that stew. According to One, Five used a poisonous fish whole. One also said that colorful mushrooms shouldn't be eaten. Considering Five put both of those into her stew, it's no wonder we all got sick.

But that kind of incident never deterred Five. The next time she was in charge of dinner, she tried to use some red mushrooms with white spots in a salad and Four gave her a thorough scolding. I'm not sure if Five has thick skin, but she sure is consistent. She'll bring some exotic ingredients whenever she visits and always asks, "Is this edible, Two?" And every time, I try to come up with creative recipes to utilize them fully. It's more fun than you might think! It's almost like trying to figure out how to make tough meat tender, or how to get rid of the foul odors meat can give off. I'll try anything—hitting the food, drying it out in the sun, or brining it in wine or oil. Oh, the feeling I get when I can make something I thought was completely inedible into something delicious! Nothing beats that!

Five seems to understand how I feel. She started off bringing me unusual fish and nuts, but then she started bringing extremely difficult ingredients to use, like carnivorous plants and fish with poisonous spines. I guess the greater the challenge, the greater the reward, right? Just the other day, she went out and caught a sandworm in the desert, and it wasn't a tiny one either. She really surprised me with that one. It was gargantuan! I mean, how can you not give it your all after seeing something like that and the effort she put into catching it? I did my best, and a couple of days later, I made a wonderful sandworm soup! I was so happy when the soup was done. It feels wonderful when your efforts are rewarded, doesn't it?

> "Five's the type that constantly aims high. You could say she's adventurous—courageous even—when it comes to food. No, that's not right. Maybe an evangelist? A guru? Uh...what's the word?"

> "I believe you mean her tastes are *bizarre.*"

> "Ummm... Well, I guess you could say that."

But when living in the land of Sands, having a bizarre taste is a vital survival skill. It's not unusual to go days without a drop of rain here. This country is more likely to see a year of famine than one with plenty of rain. If you can catch a monster and use it for food, then you won't die of starvation, right? We can all dine together no matter what happens, and it's all thanks to Five.

> "Anyway, the troll's ready. I just need to simmer it for a while. And now..."

I open the barrel I had sitting in the corner of the kitchen after I toss the troll meat chunks into the stew. The smell of liquor stings my nose. I've been preparing this for two whole weeks.

> "Okay, it's looking good."

Now to put it onto the counter.

> "Rragh! Ha! Ha!"

Smack! Smack! I strike the meat repeatedly with a club.

> "Two...' what is that?"

> "Oh, this? It's minotaur thigh. I think it's called tendon or something. It's from the minotaurs we slew a while ago. I picked the remaining meat since we didn't finish it all, remember?"

I washed the meat thoroughly, soused it, and then let it sit in wine two weeks ago. Minotaur meat is delicious, but it's so tough that it needs a good tenderizing first.

> "I'm pounding the meat to tenderize it so that it's nice and soft. Then I'm going to cut it up and stir-fry it with some veggies. Huh? Wait a minute... I've been telling you what I'm making, haven't I? I guess asking you not to look was kind of pointless..."

> "No, my lady. It is not pointless. It's obvious that such explanations are beyond the comprehension of a disciple of my caliber."

> "Wow! That's incredible! You're so amazing Cent!"

What should I do? My heart won’t stop racing! Why is Cent so handsome and charming? I love him so much that I could die! Wait, no… I can’t be with him if I die. But I don’t know what to do! My heart can’t take this anymore! It’s beating so fast!

“Dab, what am I thinking about? Be still, my beating heart! I need to calm down! Focus…focus! Hiya! Hiya! Hiya!”

I smack the minotaur tendon over and over.

“Hiya! Hiya! Hiya!”

Phew, this is hard work… And all this smacking has actually calmed me down. I am kind of out of breath, though… And… Oh dear. The tendon looks like minced meat. And there’s a crack in the counter…

“Oops…I guess I overdid it. Oh well. Hehehe.”

I collect myself and attempt to start cutting up the veggies when I hear some voices from the door.

"Two!"

"Let's play!"

"Play with us, please!"

"Huh? What's the matter?"

I see their cute little faces all lined up by the door. Oh, these precious little children.

They’re orphans. The Land of Sands is impoverished and the old ruler was a really lousy guy, so a lot of people, adults, and children, died under his rule. These kids survived, but they were left all alone. That's why I decided to take them in an live together. Even if their moms and dads aren't here, they won't be lonely if we're all together.

I was never lonely growing up because I had One, Three, Four, and Five by my side. There were times when I'd remember Mom and Dad and want to cry, but I never did. And that's because I had my sisters.

But why are the children even here? "I thought you were all leaving for a slumber party."

I had everyone at the shrine take the day off, so I asked them to take care of the kids for the day.

"Well..."

"We came back."

"We wanna be with you!"

"Come on, let's play!"

Oh, these adorable kids are holding hands lined up by the entryway. They're my...family. Then I feel a hand gently touch my shoulder.

"Don't worry about me, Two."

I turn around to see Cent's smiling face. Ah, Cent completely understands. My feelings, my desires, what's important to me. Everything. It's not because I'm an Intoner and he's my disciple, right? I'm sure that I'd have fallen in love with Cent and he'd have fallen in love with me no matter what our roles were... Right?

"Let's have dinner for two some other time."

"Yeah. Thank you, Cent."

I love you, Cent. I love you more than anyone in this whole world. I'm so glad we met.

"All right, wait a sec, okay? I'm making a yummy meal and we can all eat together when I'm done!"

The children squeal in joy. I go back to cooking for my beloved Cent and my precious family.



Three's Novella – My Dolls Are Nice Dolls *Translation by Siliconera*

Month X / Day X

Today, I made my first doll. Although I copied someone else's way of making it, it's my very own doll that I made. It turned out much better than I thought, so I was very pleased.

Month X / Day X

The Mr. Soldier doll I copied, is actually from a game called "chess". The Mr. Soldier I took from the lord's castle was the first doll I've ever owned. I've always liked dolls since I was little, but I've never had one of my own. After I got caught taking it outside the castle, One scolded me, but I couldn't let go of the doll. Because it was my first. Even if I get scolded, I like dolls.

Month X / Day X

Today, I made my eighth doll. I am now done with the black Mr. Soldier dolls. I think I'll start making white Mr. Soldier dolls tomorrow.

Month X / Day X

I finished making the white Mr. Soldier dolls. Now, I'm finished with all the Mr. Soldiers, so I'll be making other dolls tomorrow. On the "Chessboard" I saw, there were dolls on horses, but I don't think I'll make horses. It's because I like dolls that are in the shape of humans, rather than animals. There were also dolls of houses, but that's boring so I won't make those either. Besides, dolls made into houses aren't human-shaped, right? Houses can't move or talk. So, instead of horses and houses, I wonder what kind of dolls I should make? There are kings and queens. Maybe I should make a doll with strange clothes, such as the "bishop". But, what is a bishop? I think I'll look into it next time.

Month X / Day X

I looked up "bishop" and found out what it is. They are important people called "priests". They wear strange clothes and hats. In the book, it was written that "bishops" shave the top of their heads, and don't have any hair. I didn't know that, so I initially made the "bishop" doll have a normal head under its hat. I immediately trimmed the doll's hair to make it shorter. It was difficult making it into a nice round shape, as shown in the book; however, it is now a proper "bishop" doll.

Month X / Day X

I was reading about a living being that has an upper half of a human's body, and the lower half of a horse. I'd been wondering what I should do instead of a horse doll, so this is perfect, and I've decided to make it. I kept reading the book, hoping there might be something to replace the house doll, too.

Month X / Day X

In chess, the horse doll is known as the "knight". So that's it. I could've just made a human doll riding on a horse from the start. I recall seeing a chess doll riding on a horse at the lord's castle. Since there were more that weren't riding a horse, I thought that would be normal. Either way, since I already made it, it's fine. I also checked to see if the "house" doll could be something else, and it wasn't a house, but a castle (rook). Since it's not a human or a living thing, I was disappointed. After giving it some thought, I decided to make the castle doll into a monster I saw in a book. It was a giant monster. If I tie both arms behind and twist the legs, it looks like a building, right? Just to make it look more like a building, I'll add stairs and ladders to it.

Month X / Day X

I finished making all 64 pieces of the chess dolls. After lining them up, I can see that I've gotten better. I'm happy. I wonder what kind of dolls I should make next.

Month X / Day X

Today, I made a doll from my own ideas, instead of copying one. Up until now, it was always troublesome gathering the material, but making it like this won't involve such troubles. Besides, it's much more wonderful and prettier than a chess doll. This time, it really is my very own doll. My cute, cute doll.

Month X / Day X

Today, I played with all the dolls I've made. In the picture book, there was a girl who played with dolls, so I decided to play with them too. The girl in the book played with her father doll, mother doll, grandmother doll, grandfather doll, and children dolls. But I don't really like my father and mother, so playing that way wasn't very fun. Besides, I don't have a grandfather or grandmother. Octa is a grandfather, but not mine. I'll think of a different way to play.

Month X / Day X

Today, I played "bad-guy hunting" with my dolls. I prepared a One doll, Two doll, Four doll, and Five doll, and beat up the bad lord. They're dolls and don't have the power of songs, so I believe I was able to well replicate the part they all united their powers to fight. It was very fun, but the bad lord's doll broke. I must now make a new doll. It's fun to play, but I think I prefer making instead.

Month X / Day X

Today, I played "teatime" with my dolls. Playing "bad-guy hunting" broke my dolls, but drinking tea and speaking shouldn't break them. Having conversations with dolls is very fun. The dolls pay close attention to my stories. The dolls never complain. They don't say things like, "What does that mean?" or "I don't know what you're saying". For being so well behaved, I made them sweets. I also made tea. It's a very pretty purple tea that looks like a jewel. I wanted to match the sweets, but I couldn't get them to be the same color, so they were green sweets. After feeding the dolls sweets and giving them tea to drink, their faces turned to a dirty color. I washed them but they would not return to their normal colors. To top it off, they got a strange smell, so I decided to throw them away. I must now make new dolls. I won't be playing "teatime" anymore.

Month X / Day X

I like dolls, but I also like scissors. From the cutting sound it makes, to the feeling I get in my hands, I love everything about it. When I cut my hair, I have so much fun, I even forget to eat at times. When I tried cutting Octa's hair, it wasn't like mine, and it was very hard and rough. I tried cutting his mustache, but he ran away. Actually, I wanted to make him look like a "bishop". While I like scissors, I don't think Octa does. And they're so fun, too. Also, it doesn't seem as though Octa likes dolls that much, either.

Month X / Day X

Octa wears strange shoes. They have a funny shape. I wanted to make my dolls wear them, but Octa wouldn't let me borrow them. Even though he wears such shoes, he's actually very fast when he runs away. The time I tried to cut his mustache, he ran away with surprisingly fast speed. When I tried cutting other parts, he was even faster. Weirdo. I wonder why he doesn't want it? It's fun. I really don't know. Now that I mention it, lately, Octa doesn't play with me much. That's because Octa doesn't like dolls. I want to play with dolls. I think Octa, who doesn't like dolls, should go play by himself.

Month X / Day X

Today, I spent a lot of time thinking about the meaning of "cuter". Personally, I think all the dolls are cute. They're all cute in their own ways. Maybe because of that, I didn't know the meaning of "cute" versus "cuter". Then, I decided I'd put them in order, from simply "cute" to "cuter" and maybe I'd understand the difference. I gathered all the dolls I've made up until now, and arranged them in order of "cuteness". I was then able to note the difference. Firstly, ones with wider foreheads are cuter than the ones with narrow foreheads. Then, the ones with bigger heads are cuter than smaller heads. Instead of small and thin eyes, the ones with large and wide eyes are cuter. Smaller mouths and noses are also cuter. The ones with plump cheeks are cuter. The dolls with fat and short arms and legs are cuter, too. The ones with their stomachs sticking out are cuter than ones with flat stomachs. So that means, I'll make them with bigger heads, wider foreheads, big eyes, smaller mouths and noses, and plump cheeks. Yes, I have it! The way to make dolls cuter. I think I'll try it out first thing tomorrow.

Month X / Day X

Today, I worked on making the dolls "cuter". After trying, though, it was much more difficult than I had expected. First of all, it was difficult to make their heads larger. This is because the dolls' heads are hard. It's not like I can inflate them like a balloon. Making foreheads wider, and noses smaller, didn't go too well either. This is because I can't carve them like wood, or mold and make them rounder like clay. After trying this and that, things

didn't go too well, and I ruined one doll; however, I did finally stumble upon a good idea. Since it's hard to change the size of their heads, what if I were to change the size of their bodies instead? I thought I could change the length of their arms and legs. After trying it, I was able to do it. I thought it might be difficult to make their bellies poke out, but after looking at the pillow on my bed, I was struck by another good idea. The more the insides of pillows and cushions are filled, the fluffier they become. All I have to do is fill the dolls' stomachs with more "fluff". Sure enough, after filling then with plenty of "fluff," they developed nice round stomachs. It was a great success.

Since I was able to make their stomachs nice and plump, I did the same to their arms and legs, too. They became cute and plump arms and legs. Their fingers would also look cuter if they were plumper, so I filled them up with "fluff" as well, one by one, even though it was a little difficult. I even filled their palms. Then when I put on their previous heads, I was able to make them into dolls with large heads, with plump arms and legs. However, I'm still not very good at it, so their width and length didn't match, and they looked awkward. If I make many like I did with the chess dolls, I think I'll become better. I thought I'd do my best tomorrow.

Month X / Day X

I became better at making plump dolls with big heads today. They no longer look awkward. While making them, I noticed that the "cuter dolls" have limbs and bellies that resemble those of a baby. Babies also have large heads. They also have wide foreheads, and wide eyes, with small mouths and noses. That's it... making them "cuter" means making them look like babies. Yes, I understand now. I'll try making their cheeks a little more squishy. That's how baby cheeks are, aren't they? Perhaps I'll fill them with something softer than "fluff," too. What should it be? I think I'll give it some more thought.

Month X / Day X

I spent the entire day looking for "cheek filling". Something very soft with a nice feel to it. The insides of a featherbed? How about the insides of a cushion? What about a plush? Or sweets? I tried cutting many things that are plump or fluffy, to check their insides.

When I cut the featherbed, many tiny feathers scattered across the room. I accidentally inhaled some, and couldn't stop sneezing. After cutting sweet and fluffy snacks, my scissors got sticky from the cream. After seeing me sneezing while licking off the sticky cream, Octa began to look, looking disturbed at the same time. After that, Octa washed my hair and changed my clothes that were covered in feathers, and I finally stopped sneezing. But I couldn't find something that could be used as a filling for cheeks. What are baby cheeks made of...?



Month X / Day X

I tried many different ways, but in the end, I decided to loosen the strings inside the cheeks of the dolls. This seemed like the best way to do it. I carefully loosened the white, red, and pink strings, and made them into soft, fine threads that filled the insides of their cheeks. I had to make them fluffy, and not jam-packed. They also couldn't be shriveled up, so I kept on feeling them with my fingers to test their softness.

Month X / Day X

It took days and days, but I was finally able to make a "cuter doll" with baby-like cheeks. It has a plump stomach, with plump arms and legs. My cute, cute doll. However, I want to make even cuter dolls. What kind of dolls are even cuter? What could their insides consist of? What kind of material should I use? What would make it even cuter? I think I'll give it some more thought.

I think Octa wants to play, but I'm too busy. After making a cuter doll, I think I'll just want to make an even cuter doll after that. I wonder what kind of doll I should make next. I want something that is much cuter, so I can have many more dolls to play with. Tee hee hee... hehehe.

Four's Novella – Family Portrait

From Drakengard 3 Official English Website (no longer exists)



> "Five! I know it was you. Don't just leave your clothes lying on the floor!"

I've already yelled at her to clean it up. So what if the house is abandoned and no one lives here? It isn't ours to do with as we please. We're here to rest from our travels and take shelter—that's *it*. And when we leave, we need to put things back the way we found them. We're not slobs.

But Five has been shedding her clothes and spilling her food like she owns the place. She ought to try cleaning up after herself. Well, I suppose it's to be expected from the youngest in any family.

I start to fold her dress and catch myself grimacing. There's a big tear in the seam under the sleeve. Oh, of course. She probably forgot all about this dress the second she found something else to change into. "What am I going to do with her?"

I let out a big sigh. Not only do I clean up after Five, but I also wind up mending her clothes, too. But she's all thumbs, anyway; if I made her do the needlework, we'd just wind up with more rags. Either that or she'd prick her finger or something and make a big scene. Best to avoid the trouble and handle this myself. One open seam won't take more than a few minutes.

I spread out the dress to check it for other tears, and now I've noticed there's hair all over the floor. "Three," I groan. "Not you, too."

Three has made a bad habit of this: sitting down any old place and then getting her hair all over everything when she cuts it. It's not my older sister's fault her hair grows faster than other people's, but honestly, I swear she does this for kicks. I mean, if it's that much of a hassle, she could just chop it off at shoulder length. But Three cuts the ends; she'll just grab a clump of hair and *snick, snick* away at it with her scissors. I think she enjoys it. You could almost call it a hobby—a really weird one, in my opinion.

In fact, she's a little weird in general. All right, a lot weird. Exceedingly weird. Actually, I'm still mincing words. She's a certifiable loon.

As I think this, I hear the *snick, snick* getting closer. Here she comes. "Three, would you stop getting your hair all—" But *over the place* is dead on arrival. Three has been cutting her hair as she walks. With each *snick,* more of her silky hair flutters toward the floor.

> "Need something?" she says. The fallen hair is getting on everything. Her brazenness has knocked the words right out of me. If it were Five, I would already be yelling, "Stop making a mess!"
>
> "Three, maybe you shouldn't cut your hair while you walk."
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Why not? Because... Because scissors are sharp, right? If your hand slips, you could hurt yourself."

"I'll be fine." Three cuts off another lock of hair as if to say: *See? Not dangerous.* I feel my shoulders slump. What a waste of time. I should have known who I was dealing with right from the start.

"All right, you'll be fine. But could you please pick up the hair you've gotten all over everything? This isn't our house." I shudder to think what the next people to come in will think if they find mounds of hair all over the floor. I know I'd be creeped out. "Here you go." I hold out a broom realizing as I do that it's another waste of time.

"I'm tired," says Three. Sure enough, she flops down on her butt, keels over, and is asleep before I can blink. She's not *pretending* to be asleep; she's actually doing it. It's incredible, in a way.

I can't sleep if you so much as switch out my pillow, but Three—she can deal with a different mattress, or no mattress at all, or even just a patch of dirt. If she can get horizontal, she can sleep. You could raise the roof right next to her and she wouldn't care. No matter how dirty her clothes get, she doesn't mind. As delicate as she looks, Three is a tough one to faze.

It's a shame. Three has the prettiest face of all of us. But despite being a beautiful young woman, she's impudent and slovenly and just plain odd. I doubt anyone would believe it if you told them.

What a shame about her hair too. It's straight and lustrous and feels just like silk, and here she is clumsily hacking it to pieces. If I had hair like that, I'd cut it nice and even, or at least do it up properly. And if I had Three's face, wouldn't catch me rolling around on the floor. I would want to be *presentable*. I can't fathom how someone could be born this pretty and wreck it all with bad hair and worse behavior. Three is frittering away nature's gifts. She doesn't even seem the slightest bit interested in using her head, as smart as she is.

Maybe that's what separates the loons from the non-loons. I bet loons never give any thought to falling in love or leading ordinary, happy lives.

Once I've put a coat on Three so she doesn't catch a cold, I clean up the hair on the floor and stitch up Five's dress. I've really gotten the short end of the stick, haven't I?

Three may be strange beyond reproach, but I've got to do something about Five. We're hurting her in the long run by letting her act spoiled and take people for granted all the time just because she's the youngest. Today, I need to finally give her a good talking-to.

And how unfair is that? I'm sure I must have been the youngest child up until Five was born, but I have no memory of it. As far back as I can remember, Five has been there and I've been on big sister duty as second youngest. Grown-ups tell me I need to "tough it out" because I'm older, as if *that* makes any sense. When have I ever begged to have my way or burdened people the way Five does?

You know, I'm probably not cut out to be the youngest child anyway. My conscience and common sense would get in the way if I tried to pull one of Five's selfish tricks. The first thing to jump to mind would be how much I'm putting other people out. And more than anything—

> "Four? Did you want to see me?"

This. I can't be this smooth a customer. Never in a million years will I have the brass to wait until right *after* someone finishes mending my clothes to come crawling in.

> "You know you're not supposed to leave your clothes lying around. How many times do I have to tell you? And look what you did to the seam!"
>
> "Oh, that's not me."
>
> "I don't want to hear it. I stitched it up for you this time, but next time you're on your own."
>
> "It really wasn't me! Honest." The nerve of her. Who but Five could ever be a big enough slouch to try and pin the blame on someone else?

"Oh, Four. Sorry!" says a tomboyish voice. "That one's my fault." My older sister Two is scratching herself when she turns up. She can get a little rough around the edges, but what baffles me is that it comes across as lovable. If I acted like that, people would probably mistake me for an actual boy, not some lovable tomboy. And if Five tried it, they'd think she popped a screw. Why is Two the only one who gets to be able to pull it off?

Well, anyway.

"But, Two, this is Five's dress." It doesn't have her name written on it, but I'm pretty good at remembering whose clothes are whose. When you have to pick up after everyone and mend their clothes, you get pretty good at telling people's belongings apart. So the dress is clearly Five's. The thing is, Two would never lie to me...

"Yeah. It *was* Five's dress." Aha. Mystery solved. So that's what happened. I knew Two wouldn't lie to me. "Was" means she got the dress as a hand-me-down. It makes sense. Total sense. No further explanation needed. I get it. Please don't go there, Five!

But she does.

"The dress was squeezing me so hard I just couldn't wear it anymore." Five sticks out her chest as she explains, and I feel a tinge of anger. A girl her age shouldn't be this developed, let alone flaunt it. It's sick. She ought to be ashamed of herself. I mean, what is it they say? You're born with either tits or wits?

"Five said she was done with it, so I took it off her hands." Two explains with a big smile, completely unfazed by our little sister's pig show. Would it hurt Two to reprimand Five just once? It's a big sister's duty, if you ask me. "But when I tried it on, I flexed a little too hard and...*rrrip.*"

"The seam burst."

"Bingo! That's right, Four." Two's muscles are overpowered, so she's always breaking things or punching holes in the wall. But then she says, "Oh no!" and turns white as a sheet. It's kind of ironic that one of us with the best intentions does the most damage. She'd be a real catch otherwise.

"Can you *believe* I ruined a dress someone just gave me? I went to find a needle and thread to see if I could fix it up."

"Here you are, Two." I hold out the dress, which is all stitched up now. Unlike Five, Two can take care of herself, but she's a little clumsy. She's decent enough with her fingers, but a little disorganized, you might say. So I tend to get things taken care of first. It doesn't upset me though, since Two isn't trying to unload her chores on people.

"Whoa! Hang on. You're kidding. You did this for me? This is amazing! How'd you do it so fast? It's perfect!" Two will never flatter you or dole out empty compliments. Her praise comes from the heart. Everything about her does; she's cheerful, eager, kind, compassionate.

But my sister is so honest sometimes that I worry about her. Those same qualities can be flipped around and used against you. People like that are easy to trick and to take advantage of, right?

Which is bad enough in itself, but Two is likable and attractive. It wouldn't surprise if unsavory sorts came up to her with less than good intentions. She projects a sort of helplessness and flightiness which makes her look like an easy mark. And, in fact, she probably *is* an easy mark.

But knowing her, even if she did get burned, she'd probably bounce right back and convince herself it was a one-time mistake. I'm sure she'd say "This time I'll meet Mr. Right," and keep letting men use her and then toss her aside. Another troubling thought.

I mean, someone as attractive as her shouldn't be throwing away her life to chase after a bunch of worthless jerks, right? With her good looks? Talk about going downhill. What a tragedy. It worries me sick just imagining. That's right. I'm only thinking of her!

"Four, you're the *best!* Let me go try it on." I hear Two squealing in delight as she does, and next she's saying, "Yay! It's a perfect fit!" as she turns in circles. It almost feels like *I'm* the big sister.

"Well? What do you think? Huh?" Once Five and I manage a nod, Two's face lights up in a big grin and she wheels around. "I've got to show this to One!" she gasps, and flies out of the room without even shutting the door. She can be such a child. Well, she *is* a child. This whole journey, we've been going around trouncing villains and monsters that have been tormenting innocent people. It's been easy to forget that we're all still kids. And Five doesn't help with all that flaunting and the filth she spouts.

"Oh, Four." The indecent creature is slinking up behind me right now. I've got a bad feeling about this. "Now did I lie to you or not?"

"No. I misjudged you."

"Why do you always have to treat me like the villain? You hurt my feelings," she says with absolutely no hurt in her voice. I can feel her pressing right up against my back.

"I was wrong," I manage.

"Is that it? Aren't you going to say you're sorry?"

"I'm sorry," I manage again.

"I can't *hear* you."

"I said, I'm *SORRY!*" Ugh. I'm not usually this easy to get to. She thinks she's so smart. Jerk. "Could you get away from me now? You're crushing me."

Her and her oversized bazoom! It ticks me off!

"Mmm," she moans. "You don't like being crushed? Why?
Because you can't do it with those pancakes?"

"WELL, EXCUSE ME AND MY PANCAKES! LIKE I'D EVER WANT TO BE LIKE YOU! GET AWAY FROM ME, IT'S HOT ENOUGH IN HERE! AND DON'T 'MMM' ME! YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO BE ACTING LIKE SOME FILTHY WHORE. I BET THE FOOD YOU EAT GOES RIGHT TO YOUR TITS AND YOU'VE GOT THE BRAINS OF A STUPID COW. YOU STUPID DUMBSHIT! DUMBSHIT, DUMBSHIT, DUMBSHIT!"

"Oh, Four! Stop! You're so scary."

"SHUT UP! BITCHCOW! GO EAT SOME BITCHGRASS!" Soon, I'm grabbing everything within reach and throwing it at her. But she writhes and moans and dodges it all, which only manages to piss me off even more.

I hate you so much! All of you! I despise you! I know I'll never be lovable like Two or beautiful like Three. I know that compared to Five I'm a pancake! I hate myself! I hate my face! My body! I'm not pretty or lovable and I have the most average face you can imagine. My arms and legs are gangly and I look like a twig that can never get my stupid hair to straighten out!

And these horrid nails! I hate them so much I just want to die. They keep growing and growing and get all curly and weird if I don't clip them, or else they crack or they get caught on everything. They're useless and I wish I could just rip them straight off. My arms are useless, my legs are useless, my face is useless—all of me is useless!

Maybe...I'm useless.

Me? Useless? No! I'm not the one who's useless!

YOU ARE, YOU WORTHLESS FOUL-MOUTHED SLUT! IF YOU THINK YOU AND THOSE FLOPPY SACKS OF MEAT ARE SPECIAL, THEN YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER GODDAMN THING COMING! A SHIT WOULD TURN ITS NOSE UP AT YOU, YOU'RE NOTHING, SO FUCK OFF!

YOU TOO! YOU MUSCLE-BOUND LOVEY-DOVEY FREAK! AND YOU, YOU FUCKED-UP-WACK-JOB SCISSOR FIEND! YOUR BIG FAT BRAIN DOESN'T MEAN JACK SHIT! YOU AND YOUR STUPID PRETTY SKIN. IF IT'S SO PRETTY, WHY DON'T I RIP IT RIGHT OFF SO YOU CAN STARE AT IT? I'LL YANK IT RIGHT OVER YOUR BITCH SHOULDERS AND TEAR IT INTO TINY FUCKING PIECES SO YOU CAN WATCH ME ***GRIND*** *IT INTO THE FLOOR!*

I'm laughing maniacally now. *I FEEL BETTER! I FEEL* ***MUCH*** *BETTER!*

When I come around, the room is in shambles. And yet there's Three, still sound asleep. The fact that she managed to stay dead to the world through that much commotion has to make her some kind of prodigy. A loon prodigy.

Five must have fled the scene a while ago. She's not very smart, but she is smooth.

"I am such an idiot." I know I have to get this cleaned up fast. Whoever makes the mess has to clean it up. Everyone knows that. But when I see my sisters not doing it, I start to feel pretty stupid being the only one playing by the rules.

I put back the chairs and table I had upended, pick up the decanter, and wipe the floor. Oh no, I can't believe it. Was I throwing dishes? Five hadn't bothered to clear her place, and even now there are bits of food stuck to the pieces.

I sigh. "Why me?" But while Five may not have cleaned the dishes up, I'm the one who threw them and broke them. This is on me. From now on, I'll have to keep my temper tantrums to a minimum. Even if I get mad, I need to hold it in. Because no matter what I say or do, I'm only hurting myself in the end.

When at last the cleaning is done, I take a seat in a chair. I sure am tired. Maybe not on Three's level—but really tired.

"Is anyone here?"

My head has been facing down on the table, but I look up. My eldest sister has just come in.

"One, what's wrong?"

"Oh, I'm glad you're here, Four. Can you help me?"

"Should I wake Three up?"

After just a glance at Three, who is still sleeping like a log on the floor, One shakes her head. "Leave her be. You'll more than do." *You'll more than do.* I hear the words again in my head. They make me happy. One appreciates me...

Of all my sisters, One is the brightest, and the most knowledgeable, and the most dependable. She is responsible and just. She might not be lovable like Two or beautiful like Three, but her every expression and gesture exudes wisdom. That's why she's my role model. I can't do anything about my face, but I can always get wiser.

Also, One has pancakes like me. For now, anyway.

"One, what do you need help with?" I ask as I walk a few steps behind her.

"Fixing a cart. I got us one at a nearby farm."

"A cart? What for?"

"There's something we'll need to carry once we get where we're going next." As I look at her in profile like this, the resolve on her face is pronounced. This is the expression she makes before going into battle. And we won't be doing it for ourselves. It will be for someone else: people who are suffering. One isn't the sort to turn a blind eye to injustice.

But sometimes I feel sorry for her when I see her like this; she has so many responsibilities. And she's not even the oldest of us, really. She's only in this position because she got sort of...bumped up the ladder, you might say. The truth is, One is someone's little sister, too. Someone else is supposed to be eldest and shoulder all this responsibility and tell us what to do...

"Um... Listen. You know I'm here to do everything I can to help you, right? You don't have to make every problem your own."

One seems a little surprised at first, but then her eyes soften and she replies, "Thank you." Two is unreliable, Three is weird, Five is selfish. That means I've got to help One. As dependable as she is, she's trying to fill the shoes of someone else, and that can't be easy.

Don't worry, I'll be there for you. That's what little sisters do. Well, at least this little. Right, One?

"Huh?" When I wake up, One is gone. The cart we were supposed to fix and the vacant house we had borrowed are gone, too. I'm in the same bed I always sleep in. "Oh...it was just a dream."

Of course it was. After all, we're all grown up now, and our journey is over. I used to think we could still go back to those days, when the five of us traveled together, but too much has changed.

I find myself wishing I dreamed of an older memory. One from way far back, when we had Zero, who was stronger and more beautiful than any of us. Back when I loved her, and admired her, and tried to be just like her.

But then, I still love her. She's my sister. She's family. I still believe she'll go back to the way she was so we can all live together again. So we can all be happy again.

And maybe I won't mind if there's one or two less of us.

Five's Novella – My Favorite Things

From Drakengard 3 Official English Website (no longer exists)

This world is made up of things that I want, and things that I *really* want.

...As one of my big sisters, Two, might put it.

What Two had actually said was, "This world is made up of things that I like, and things that I really like."

That got me thinking about my version of what this world could be made up of. I don't have as big a heart as Two does; I could never claim that the world is full of things that I like. Honestly, there are too many things that I dislike. Nasty foods, ugly clothes, boring people...

But just because I don't like it doesn't mean I don't want it. I mean, what if that food isn't tasty because it isn't being cooked right? One time, Two wrestled with the stomach of a sandworm to make me an unbelievably delectable soup. I think she said she had to cure it in salt first before drying it in the sun, and then spent days stirring the pot as it stewed. Now, that was far more complicated a process than I would be willing to go to, but it proves that it's worth wanting.

You can make ugly clothes presentable with enough accessories. And boring people can turn out to be quite useful as servants. You have to make something your own to determine its true worth. Wouldn't you agree?

So I don't think there is anything in the world that I don't want. But there are things that I want just a little bit. And then there are things that I want *badly*.

What I want the most, of course, are pretty accessories, clothes, and shoes. I prefer gold over silver in my accessories. And lots of sparkling jewels! Like a walnut-sized sapphire brooch studded with tiny aquamarine and diamond pieces. Or an emerald-encrusted gold work necklace.

I like lace in the clothes that I wear. I almost passed out one time while trying on a robe made entirely of lace! I love lace in detachable collars, shawls, even handkerchiefs.

Apparently, it takes a lot of time and effort to make lace. Four told me that prices hike up with even just a little bit of lace around the edges.

> "You could feed a poor family for days with the money you would spend on just one of these frilly things. Do you still want to keep playing dress-up like a little girl?"

Four always speaks the truth, as an older sister should. So I replied:

> "You're right, Four. I don't need this dress anymore."

I was getting tired of that holey rag anyway.

My favorite right now is the one with lots of ribbons. Layered bow ties made of fine thin silk, all over the sleeves and torso! Isn't it adorable? I think I should make a decorative belt out of ribbon and squeeze it tight around my waist to highlight my magnificent bosom. Wouldn't that be a feast for the eyes?

I bet this dress covered in ribbons is expensive, too. How many days could this feed a poor family, I wonder.

But it's not as though these poor people would be able to stuff themselves if I stopped dressing up. Those issues are unrelated. Besides, I didn't pay for these dresses out of my pocket. They just *became* mine after we offed our former lord.

It was that lord that extorted money from people and then squandered it. It wasn't me.

Anyway, what should I wear today? The one with the ribbons? I love this dress with the damask folded in, too. The gold and silver threads really complement the color of my hair. Or maybe I should wear this one with sable fur around the hem and cuffs—

> "Mmff... Five? You up already?"

Whose voice do I hear from directly behind me? My disciple's, of course. So cute. I love him so much. Poor thing, he sounds groggy.

"You can go back to sleep, Dito."

Young'uns need lots of sleep. Especially Dito because he stays up late every night.

"Not with the fuss you're making."

"Oh. So sorry."

"No worries."

I love the way he yawns and stretches loudly. He is so beautiful that I can barely contain myself. His face is like a doll.

And by doll, I don't mean like the toy soldiers that Three makes. I mean normal dolls. Cute girl dolls.

But Dito is so much cuter. Skin as white as snow, eyes twinkling like the brightest stars. His soft curls feel so airy through my fingers I could rub my hands over his head forever. I like Dito the most. Dito is my favorite toy.

"You're playing with your dresses again? So early in the morning? You're such a dork, Five."

I even like the way he mouths off. Maybe it's the element of surprise in hearing such venom being spouted from such an angelic face. I firmly believe that the key to every relationship between a man and a woman is unpredictability. I mean, wouldn't you rather your lover take on a completely different persona in bed?

But I digress.

"I have to get up as early as I can. A day goes by so fast," I say.

"Well, of course you'd run out of time when you're changing clothes four times a day. Why can't you just wear the same clothes until nighttime?"

"Perish the thought! With so many dresses, how could I wear but one a day?"

It's not as though circumstances don't allow me to change because I'm traveling, or because there is nothing else to wear. To keep the same clothes on when I have so many is simply unthinkable!

"Tell me, Dito: which dress do you think I should wear?"

I take the one with the ribbons, the one with the gold and silver threads, and the one with the fur edges, and place all three in front of him. But all he does is yawn.

"I don't care. They're your damned clothes."

The disinterest in his voice sounds almost convincing. It doesn't match his cherubic face. What could be eating at him? Oh, I get it!

"You just don't like dresses because they're a hassle to take off of me."

"No, that's not exactly—"

"You've been trying to tell me that you'd rather I wore nothing at all!"

"Not really, I just—"

"But I don't mind doing it fully clothed, you know."

"Now, wait a minute!"

"I'll just get on top. Or should I stand while you take me from behind?"

"Will you stop, please!?"

"Are you being coy with me? Or is that a backward invitation?"

Maybe he really is hesitating. Dito is my disciple, after all. A disciple is enslaved by his Intoner. He is forbidden to go against my word. A disciple must perpetually serve the Intoner, day and night.

"There is no need to be shy, you know."

"This one! You wanted me to pick out a dress for you, right? Right!?"

Oh, Dito. His face is all red. Is he blushing? So adorable! Makes me want to squeeze him tight and pin him down on the floor.

"I like this one! The shiny number!"

"Forget the dress, Dito. Let's—"

"Oh, wait, wait! There's one you haven't tried yet. Remember, with the embroidery? The blue, flowery one?"

He's right. There was a rather unique blue one with flowers stitched in. And I hadn't tried it on yet.

"Stay here, Five! I'll go get the dress!"

He slips out of my arms like a cat. But why does have to leap off the bed and dash like one? I'm not the type of master that gets upset just because you're slow to fetch a dress.

I thought I heard a heavy sigh from the wardrobe, but that couldn't have been Dito. Like he is an impeccable disciple to me, I am an impeccable Intoner to Dito.

Dito walks back in, dutifully carrying the blue dress. I open it up in front of the mirror. A form-fitting glossy blue garment with finely embroidered flowers. So exotic. So bold!

Yes, I like this, too! With every step, my legs show from the deep cuts up the sides. Definitely not to Four's liking. She would probably call it tasteless.

"This is pretty. But that doesn't mean the other ones aren't. What's a girl to do?"

I already had the one with the ribbons, the one with the damask, and the one with the fur to choose from. And now this flowery blue dress, too? There is no way I can choose just one!

"I wish I had three or four bodies. Then I could wear them all at once!"

"Three or four bodies? Of YOU? Are you serious?"

"Of course I am."

"...That would be a nightmare."

Dito looks as though the world is coming to an end. I wonder what could have crossed his mind.

"I think it's a fabulous idea. Let's ask One if she knows any spells that can create three bodies of me."

Big sister One is always holed up in the vault underneath the church reading difficult books. I wouldn't be surprised at all if she knew a spell or two of the sort.

"If I had three bodies, I wouldn't have to ponder over which dress to wear. Why, I could even eat three times more."

"You already eat three times what you should."

"What? That's not true."

Sure, I have a hearty appetite. I don't like feeling hungry. Hunger makes me feel lonely. That's why I eat before I start feeling hungry.

But that doesn't mean I eat three times as much as a normal person. Dito has that mischievous grin. Mmm, I love that look on him.

"Whenever the cooks ask you if you want meat or fish, you always answer both."

"But, Dito, that would only be two times as much, not three."

Besides, if they ask me to choose one of two dishes, it has to mean they're ready either way. They wouldn't ask me that way if they weren't. Which leads me to think, if they're both available, why not have both?

"How about if they offered broiled meat, stewed meat, or steamed meat? You would say all of them."

"Well, yes, if that's the way they phrased the question."

"What if they asked you if you wanted broiled fish, steamed fish or fried fish?"

"All of them, I guess. And now you're making me hungry. I wonder if breakfast is ready yet."

"See? Your appetite is *more* than triple the norm, Five."

I really don't think my appetite is to blame. It's the pure fact that there is so much deliciousness in existence. As much as a gourmet as I am, I couldn't possibly ask for something that doesn't even exist.

But if I *do* know it exists, and it's out of my reach, I would chase it to the edges of the world.

Oh, I do love going on trips in search of good eats. It's far more thrilling than having to go hunt down some evil man, or to vanquish a monster or some other nasty thing. I tell Dito:

"I can't wait for springtime. Then we can go on one of our gourmet trips again."

"You mean the nasty beasty feasts?"

"But in Two's hands, any beast can turn into a scrumptious meal."

"Aha! Then you don't deny them being beasts?"

"Oh, there's no doubt they're beasts. But only Two can turn goblin brains into a silky pâté. Sting lizard in aspic, pickled six-eyed catfish... You can't these things just anywhere."

"They are rare, um, delicacies, I suppose."

"Exactly."

"It's not every day you have to risk your life for a meal. I certainly wish I never have to."

Oh, my. Dito. That cocky look. And the way those shoulders go up when you shrug. Now you've done it. Bad, bad boy.

"Um... Five?"

And *that* look. The uncomfortable look. It just makes me want to make him even more uncomfortable.

"You're not having any...wicked thoughts, are you, now?"

"Wicked? Heavens, no."

The way he looks up at me with those frightened pupils. He's almost like a little bunny. Mmm, and there's another fine delicacy. Rabbit meat. Stewed for hours until it's so tender it melts in your mouth. Serve it with a sweet sauce made of fruit.

"D-Didn't you say you were hungry? H-How about some b-breakfast?"

"Yes, I'll have some right now."

"Wait. Please wait, Five—"

"No. I can't wait. Don't you know me by now?"

He looked like he had more to say, but what he says doesn't really matter. Not when I'm *on*. I can't hold it back anymore. My sweet, sweet disciple. My one and only hunny-bunny. Where should I start eating?

"Why does this have to happen so early in the morning?"

"It's because of those sleepy eyes of yours, Dito."

"What you're saying doesn't match up with what you're doing."

"But don't you enjoy snoozing in my bosom?"

Even his moans are lovely. Though one could mistake them for sighs. They can't be sighs.

For all the effort and creativity I put into this, I see no reason to tolerate complaints. I try a great many things not just for my own pleasure, but for the pleasure of my partners, too.

I believe one should put in an honest effort before blaming others for an unsatisfactory experience. You can read books or talk to people. You name it, I've done it.

You can even try different partners. Luckily for me, I have plenty of partners to choose from. Men and women, even multiple partners in one night. It could very well be that there's nothing wrong with you, but that it's just a matter of chemistry.

But chemistry can be tricky. It is awfully hard to find someone who can truly impress. But I am not about to give up. Because this can't be as good as it gets. It has to be so much better.

And when I learn something really good, I'm going to share it with Dito. Because he is my precious disciple.

"No, wait... Not yet...!"

Oops. I guess I got a bit distracted. I'm sorry, Dito. Don't sigh like that. It's okay, really.

"Sweet Dito. There's no need to make such a face."

We can just have another go at it! As many times as we want. Right?

"Five, you have the appetite of three people, but the libido of thirty."

"Why, thank you for the wonderful compliment."

"...It wasn't a compliment."

"Such a good little man. You deserve a reward. Where do you want it?"

"Sounds more like I'm about to be punished than rewarded."

"Oh! So is that what you're into?"

I had no idea. To each his own, as they say. That explains why he looks so bored sometimes. Why didn't he tell me sooner? I don't mind putting in the effort and creativity, but I also think it is wiser to avoid wasting time on detours.

With the world so full of things that I want, I don't have a moment to spare. So many beautiful clothes to try on! So much delicious foods to sample! I don't want to even waste time sleeping.

"Why do you have to be so greedy?" asks Dito.

Greedy? Me?

I don't think that's entirely accurate. I think my desire for things reflects the need to feel how powerful I am.

In those moments where I finally wrap my hands around something I have really wanted, the euphoria is instant and orgasmic. Feelings like superiority and omnipotence rush out in waves from the deepest parts of my being. *Nothing* feels better than having the power to obtain what I desire.

If I didn't have that power, I don't know if I would want anything. How sad would it be to want something but not be able to get it? Why, I imagine life would be a miserable waste to pursue something that is impossible to obtain.

But one does wonder... What if there is such a thing? I can't even imagine what it might be, but I supposed there could be something that I could never, ever have.

With my hand on my heart, I begin to think...maybe there is. Something I have not noticed until now. I don't even know whether I want it or not, but it's something devoid of excess or grandeur.

What could it be?

It can't be food. And it's probably not jewelry or clothing. If it were any of those things, I could easily get my hands on it.

Is it a person? But I have plenty of servants and handmaids at my beck and call. I even have soldiers who would risk their lives for me. Men? No shortage there, either. I know of no man who could resist my advances. Unless he were my own father or something. Father... Daddy...?

"Five? Are you all right?"

"Huh...?"

Gone. I could almost make it out...but it's gone.

"This is new. I've never seen you so lost in thought while in bed."

"Well, isn't that rude? I'll have you know I am perfectly capable of having deep thoughts."

"Did I make you mad?"

"Not at all."

In fact, maybe he did me a favor by chasing away *that* particular silhouette.

There is no way I could remember my father. He died not long after I was born. To try to recall something that I have no way of knowing would be an utter waste of time.

So no more losing myself in deep thoughts. Who cares about what I can't get? I just want to keep thinking about all the things that I love. The sapphire brooch, and the emerald and gold work necklace. The dress with the ribbons, and the dress with the flowers. The robe and shawl and the detachable collar with lace.

"Now, where were we?"

And my sweet, sweet disciple.

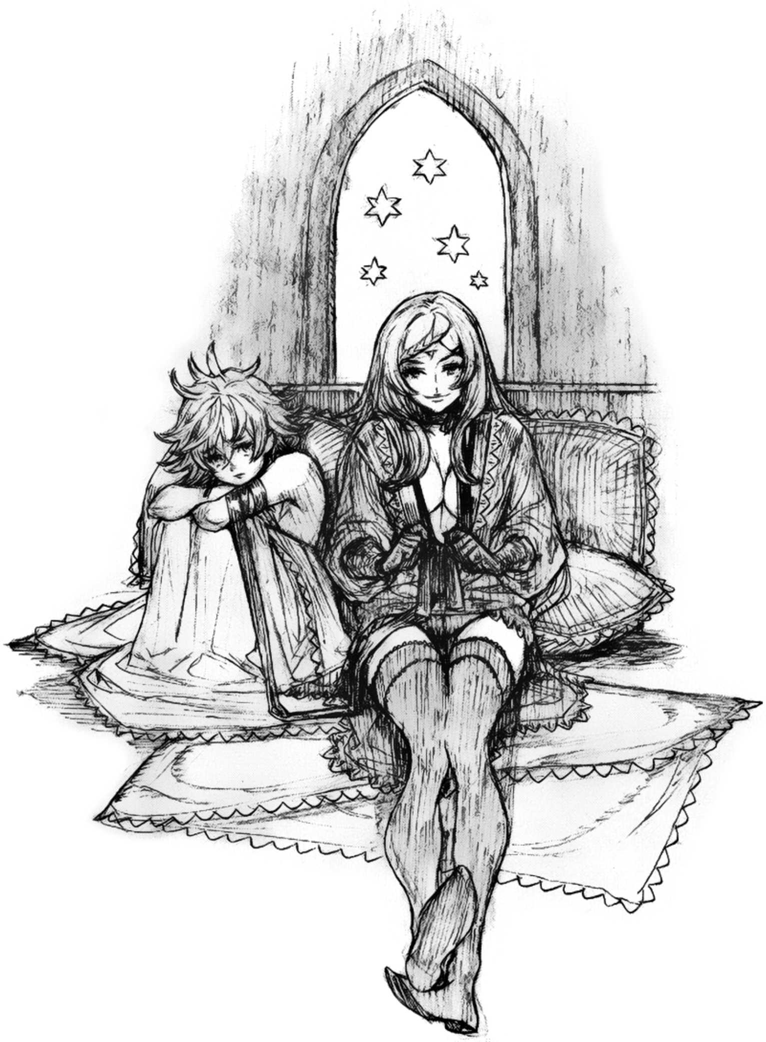
"What? Again!?"

"I'm only kidding."

I really am hungry now. Let's have breakfast. How about some soft-boiled eggs on toasted bread, with smoked fish and pickled vegetables? And the dried fruits preserved in honey. Oh, but I must decide on what to wear before that. Speaking of which, I think there was a dress with the cuffs as long as drapes. And where did the red woolen one go?

These are the things that make me happy! I just need to keep thinking about the things that I want, and things that I really want. And not think about anything else.

How could anybody be happier?



FIVE Deliveries *(images by The Dark Id)*

Delivery: Gourmet Packs

Dear Lady Five,

It's because of dedicated customers like you that we are able to provide our trademark customer service.

This notice is to confirm delivery of the following order:
- Seafood Gourmet Pack (with sea serpent eggs) x 200
- Mountain Gourmet Pack (with troll liver sauce) x 200

Do not hesitate to contact us if there are any concerns. We look forward to your continued patronage.

Delivery: Fancy Golden Dress

Dear Lady Five,

Thank you for trusting us with your delivery needs.
We hope this early summer has been a fruitful one for you.

This notice is to confirm delivery of the fancy Golden Dress you ordered. This dress, made with beautiful silks imported from the east and lavishly festooned with pure gold leaf, is one of our finest products. We hope that it meets your exacting standards.

Delivery: Secret Toys

Dear Lady Five,

Thank you for trusting us with your delivery needs.
This notice is to confirm delivery of the "Secret Toy Ultimate Pack"* you ordered. This set, one of our company's hallmark products, combines truly captivating toys from the exotic east with a selection of all-natural, water-soluble performance enhancers. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns that may arise.

* This product is meant for adults only.

Delivery: 200 Art Pieces

Dear Lady Five,

We hope you and yours are enjoying a joyful winter season.

This notice serves to inform you of the impending delivery of 200 works of art. Your order—"What's beauty?"—was difficult, but our experts amassed a carefully-selected collection of masterpieces. None, of course, could ever surpass the beauty of Our Lady, but we still look forward to receiving any feedback about the collection's quality.

Dedication of Storage Vault

Dear Lady Five,

Thank you, as always, for continuing to use our service. We trust all remains well with your glorious reign.

This notice is to confirm that your treasure storage vault has been officially dedicated as of last Sunday. As requested, it is equipped with a variety of traps to ensure that our Lady's valuables will lie unmolested by invaders. We'll happily demonstrate them if you provide a volunteer.

Delivery: Philosophy Books

Dear Lady Five,

We hope a bountiful harvest awaits you and yours this fall.

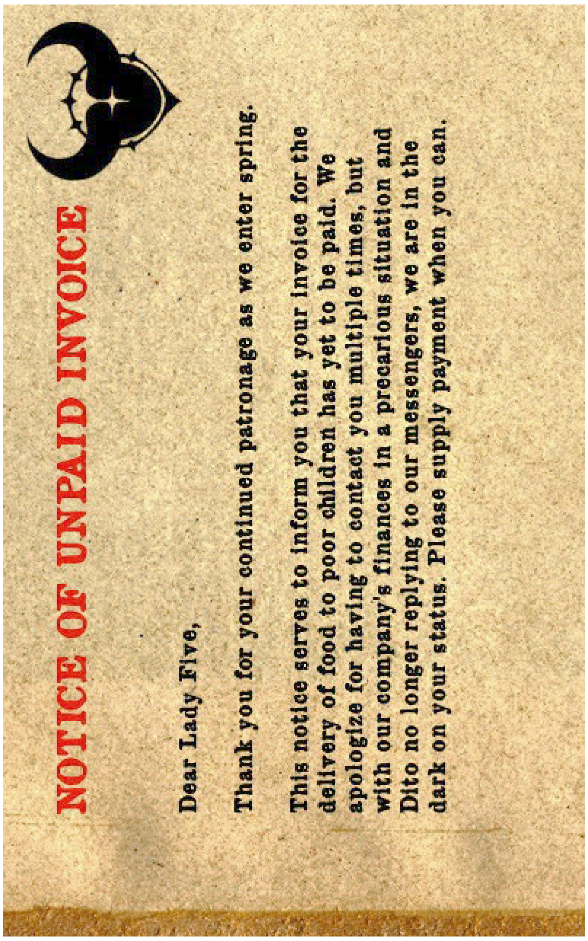
This notice confirms delivery of ten philosophy books you ordered. We pray they answer your questions "What is humanity?" and "What is happiness?" However, your recent order is on a smaller scale than previous, and when combined with the recent disposal of your treasure vault, we are worried. Please tell us if we have erred in any way.

Delivery: Roman Empire Publications

Dear Lady Five,

We trust your spirits are as bright and sunny as the blessedly warm spring weather of late.

This notice confirms reception of your request for "books to learn about ruling." Our scholars feel the Roman Empire is fitting, and have thus prepared a fine selection. Additionally, it gladdens us to see that My Lady, already a wielder of great authority, wishes to learn more.

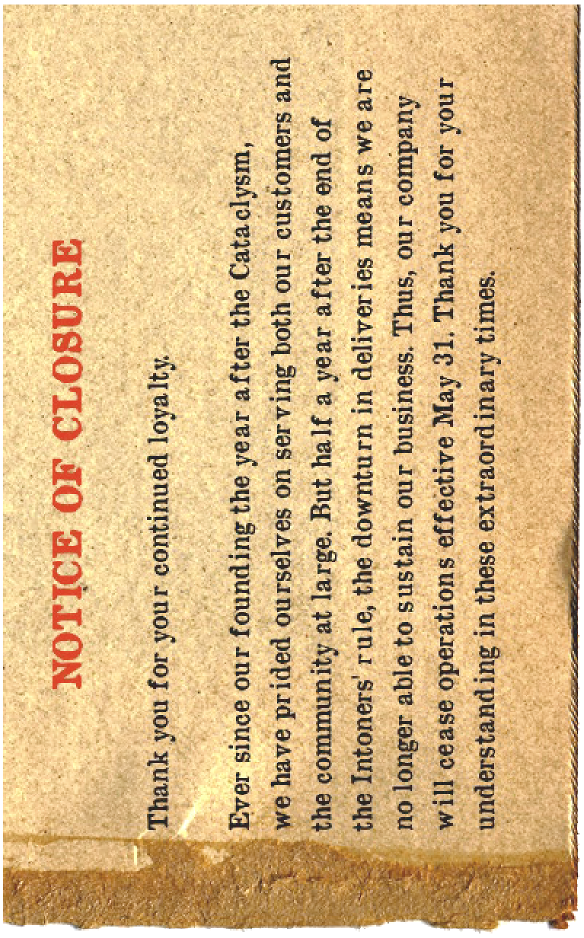


NOTICE OF UNPAID INVOICE

Dear Lady Five,

Thank you for your continued patronage as we enter spring.

This notice serves to inform you that your invoice for the delivery of food to poor children has yet to be paid. We apologize for having to contact you multiple times, but with our company's finances in a precarious situation and Dito no longer replying to our messengers, we are in the dark on your status. Please supply payment when you can.



NOTICE OF CLOSURE

Thank you for your continued loyalty.

Ever since our founding the year after the Cataclysm, we have prided ourselves on serving both our customers and the community at large. But half a year after the end of the Intoners' rule, the downturn in deliveries means we are no longer able to sustain our business. Thus, our company will cease operations effective May 31. Thank you for your understanding in these extraordinary times.

FOUR Let Me Tell You



1.00 sec

Okay. There's a lot I want to tell you all, but how 'bout I start with Zero. Let's talk about that flower in your eye. You did that on purpose, didn't you? It's all like, "Oh, I'm the oldest sister, I'm soooooo special! I have to be all different!" It looks terrible on you, you know? Like you're trying way too hard. Also, I'm tired of you treating us like our heads are full of poo. Because they're not! In fact, the way you swing that sword all day, I bet it's YOUR head that's full of poo! 'Cause you never use it

0.81 sec

Your turn, Five. You're the only little sister I have, but you act like this bitter old lady. Oops! Soorry! Did that sound harsh? ...It's totally what everyone thinks, though. And seriously, the way you throw those oversexed fat globules of yours around? Dis. Gusting. You have NO self-control, and you're ALWAYS chasing after some carnal pleasure like it's the most important thing in the freaking world. Oh, and your clothes are ugly and your makeup is reeeally sad. It's too bad money can't buy class, it's really too bad.

0.72 sec

Oh, Three. Where to begin? You try to act mysterious and alluring, but I know it's just an act. Guys always go for "project" girls like you, thinking they can "fix" them or whatever, when there are so many nice girls that would treat them better. Am I wrong? No, I'm not, and you know it. You try SO hard to pretend you don't care that it becomes painfully obvious just how much you do! Why don't you just try attracting someone with your natural charm instead? ...Oh, that's right. You don't HAVE ANY! Ha ha ha ha!

0.61 sec

It's funny; I can see what you did, Two. People can get pretty stupid when they fall in love. That's why you say things like "I want us to be together forever!" and "I want world peace!" and stuff. But really, loving your DISCIPLE? The one guy who HAS to hang out with you all the time? How convenient! Look, I admit, Cent's handsome, but that's really it. He's just an accessory, like Five's skanky clothes. Oh, and your cooking? He's totally pretending to like it.

0.50 sec

And now for you, One. I've been dying to tell you this... Pffft! Hee hee! Get it? "DYING!?" Gosh, you must hate me so much. After all, you're so right, and perfect, and smart, and I'm just some dumb little sister. But what happened once we took over, huh? I'll tell you what happened—everything went to heck! Our forces were decimated, our people lost morale, and Zero and her song KICKED THE CRAP OUT OF US! You lost that bet big-time, Sis. Too bad your fancy-pants attitude can't help you now! Hee hee! I love it! Ha ha ha!

0.35 sec

Oh! I also need to talk about all the idiots we rule over. You guys seriously suck. You rely on us for EVERYTHING, and you're all "Oh, Lady Four! Lady Four!" But you're really just greedy, lazy, good-for-nothings who can't do anything for yourselves. Is it my JOB to make you happy? Because I don't remember anything about that on the application! Yeah, I pretended to care so One wouldn't have a conniption, but I actually think we should've ground you all under our boot. Instead, you have just enough freedom to hang yourselves with.

0.18 sec

Um... what else? Oh, right! God! I've got a problem with YOU! I mean, what is UP with this world, am I right? It takes an entire DAY to go from town to town, it's too hot in summer, too cold in winter, and it either rain too much or else there's some drought going on! Oh, and why do we have to EAT if we want to live, huh? So stupid. I guess that's what you get when you crap out a world in a week. Maybe spend more than ONE SINGLE DAY on all the people next time—god! ...See that? I'm not even going to CAPITALIZE YOUR NAME!

0.04 sec

Is this STILL going on? I've already complained about everything I wanted to! This is a waste of my time. Okay, fiiine. Um... I guess... Oh, hey! Decadus! ...Actually, I don't have much to say about him. It's not like I actually always wanted him to come into my bed at night, or that I actually was really interested in sexual talk, or that I wanted him to act more forward and take charge or anything. He could have tried to be normal... In fact, I could sum up everything I want to tell him like this: "YOU ARE AN ASSHOLE!"

0.00 sec

Ahhh... About time the tip of Zero's sword reached my brain. I guess it's true—you DO get to see your whole life flash before your eyes. Geez, it takes forever! Now I had to think about all this crap I wanted to forget. Meh. Oh well. So long, One, you stubborn old bitch! So long, Two, you lovey-dovey bitch! So long, Three, you crazy weirdo bitch! So long, Five, you oversexed bitch! And so long, Zero, the bitch who's killing me right now! Oh, and the biggest bitch of all, which is, of course, me. I'll see you all in hell!

THREE My Memories

Sad and Unemployed

My border guard unit got word today that the lord is dead. It's not a surprise—we all heard about how powerful these Intoners we're fighting are, although our little frontier patrol hasn't had to meet one yet (thank goodness). To be honest, none of us care that the lord is gone. We're worried about where our next meal will come from, of course, but to be honest, he was kind of an asshole.
Hopefully, our next lord will be better.

Falling in Love

Today we met our new lord. Well, "lord" isn't quite the word. I don't know what is, actually. It's complicated. We soldiers gathered in a clearing, and our new lord (?), Lady Three, came to us. We were all sweating bullets! She's younger than I expected, and smaller, and also... cuter? Hard to imagine this girl leading us, but there it is. Most of the men were smitten with her immediately, and I was no exception. She really is quite lovely.

A Total Riot

To say Lady Three is popular is an understatement. Soldiers are falling all over themselves to be her bodyguard, her valet, her whatever. The old vets don't much like it, but screw them. Hell, it's GOOD to have a charismatic leader—it makes all of us fight that much harder.
I will say, though, Lady Three is a bit...odd. She takes our leftover food, saves beard and hair trimmings from the men, and spends all day counting insects. Maybe she realizes such things make her all the more appealing.

Sincere Devotion

The unit's on edge—rumors are flying that Lady Three is "experimenting" on human subjects.
Apparently our lady is fighting a woman named Zero, and it isn't going well. That's just what I've heard from the men, but it feels right somehow. Anyway, this Zero is a really bad character, so Lady Three is enhancing soldiers to try and even the odds. Folks seem pretty upset by it, but not me—I'll do whatever it takes to see Lady Three to victory. It's not like I have anything else to live for...

In Love

Today I saw Lady Three stagger out of her tent dressed only in her night clothes. I called out to see if she was all right, and she leaned close and whispered, "Go ahead."
I don't... I don't remember much after that. Her hands were cold as she led me into her tent, but her lily-white skin was like porcelain. She smelled of ripe fruit and summer, and... No. I must stop. My words only do it a disservice.
My lady. Ah, my lady. Why me, of all people?

A Mature Cranial Nerve

Lady Three has ignored me since that day. I finally mustered my courage and begged her to enhance me next, but she stared right through me and said, "Your cranial nerve isn't mature enough."
What does that MEAN!? What's WRONG with me!?
Soldiers disappear from our unit by the hour, taken away to become enhanced soldiers for our lady. When I think about it, I get so jealous, I vomit.

Days of Depression

I'm the only one she won't touch. The only one she won't enhance. Some of the men she chooses actually flee in terror, which only deepens my rage. They fear pain? They fear torture? I LIVE it every day she rejects me.
I wish you had never blessed me with your love, my lady. I wish this pain in my chest would end. I wish I was dead. Zero. Three. Someone. Anyone. Just make it stop.

The Greatest Day Ever

Finally, my day has come! The power of Lady Three's song will make me a better man! A stronger man! A perfect man! My body seems ready to explode with happiness, so it's a good thing she's prepared an enormous new body for me. I was special. I was CHOSEN! She chose me to be what she is calling "Cyclops." Just hearing it gives me chills! Lady Three says it comes from a giant of legend. Cyclops. The name has a sublime and ominous tone, and I only pray that my new body does it proud. I shall serve her forever!

me three think

don't know how much time passed
no sense of   time
all in toner country   destroyed
they talk of empire or federation or   don't care
lady three not see lately but fine i am fine   i
swear faith to   her   forever   so   see   look
feel   la dy   three   near
me   soul

TWO The Recipe Book



Sweet and Sour Ogre Meatballs

Today I wanted to jot down notes on my new fancy meat dish!

First, find the freshest ogre meat you can. (Any type is fine, so long as it's not too grisly!) Tenderize it for a while, then mix in diced onions, ginger, breadcrumbs, eggs, and salt and pepper to taste. Form the mix into balls, fry them in oil, then pop 'em in the oven. For the sauce, mix tomatoes, vinegar, and sugar, then spice it up!

PS - Five's gonna LOVE these! :)

Sea Serpent With Apple Sauce

I was bored this morning, so I tried out a new recipe.

First, get a sea serpent. (They're omnivorous and tend to get stinky really quickly, so yank the innards ASAP!) Cut it into bite-sized chunks, cover'em in flour, and cook both sides lightly in olive oil and garlic. For the sauce, pluck out the eyes (make sure to get all the goo!), mix in grated apple, salt, and pepper, then simmer until it thickens.

Pour the sauce over the cutlets, and bon appétit.

Two's Special Love Potion

This morning I made a nutritious drink for my beloved Cent!

Take 100 datura seeds, 50 khat leaves, and four mandrake roots (be careful picking those!). Mash'em into a fine powder, then simmer in oil. Wait for the color to change, then strain it so only the nutrients remain in the oil. Then add milk, eggs, and honey, pour into a jug, and shake like crazy!

PS - Cent drank the whole thing in one go! He probably won't sleep for a week, which is fine by me! :)

Homemade Noodles in Tomato Sauce

The five of us are together for the first time in ages, so I'm making a heaping helping of my hand-kneaded noodles!

Take a pile of flour and knead in some salt water (REALLY get into it!). Stretch it into long strands, then boil until pliable. While you're waiting, get some ground ogre meat and fry it with tomato, garlic, sesame seeds, salt, and pepper. It makes a lot, but that's okay—Five INHALES the stuff! :o

PS - I actually saw One SMILE! I'll have to make this again!

Wow'em With Raspberry Cake!

This cake recipe is just the ticket for a sweet treat!

First, kill a troll and scrape out the fat (there's LOTS!). Render it into lard, add sugar and eggs, and mix until it forms a cream. Then throw in flour, crushed walnuts, and fresh-picked raspberries from the trolls' forest. Mix it up, juuust a little, then bake it in a stone oven until a dagger inserted in the middle comes out clean.

PS - I'm totally making this for the orphans. They'll LOVE it!

Raspberry Cake for Lady Two

Lady Two has had very little appetite since that day. I fear it will affect her health before long, so I decided to follow her example and bake a raspberry cake. Sadly, I don't know the exact recipe. I asked around, but no one has heard of such an exotic dessert before. I finally started throwing things together, and after a few hundred tries, I finally got something slightly cake-like.

Unfortunately, it wasn't much to Lady Two's liking, as it just drooled out from her delicate lips. I must get better.

Oatmeal for Lady Two

It pains me to see Lady Two growing so thin.

Today, I cooked some gruel and mixed it with honey, so it would be easy to swallow. I think—THINK—we managed to get two whole spoons down, which is fantastic. But I didn't want to force it on her, so I brought her back to bed. That's when I noticed—Lady Two's heart isn't beating. She breathes and she blinks, but there's nothing from her chest. It's almost as if she's...

Water for Lady Two

For the past week, Lady Two has consumed only water.

My days blur into each other as I spend dawn to dusk speaking with my lady. I talk about all the special times we spent together, and yet she never answers.

Tonight, after I laid her down, I found my hands around her beautiful neck. It would have been so easy. Just a little bit of pressure, and she could finally have peace. Such terrible thoughts. Ah, my love. Please forgive me...

Blood for Lady Two

Today, I diluted red wine in water, mixed in my blood, and used my own mouth to give it to my lady.

Lately, something dwells in my mind. Lady Two almost never asked me for anything, but her one insistence was that I not, as she put it, "Die on her." What could I say to that? Have I succeeded in returning her kindness? Zero is on her way. But until then, we will lay in this shrine and huddle together to ward off the oncoming chill.

ONE Seven Words

Foreword

My sisters, the lords that have exploited these lands are no more, and I understand the quest to root out stragglers is going well. However, you must remain ever watchful, for the defeat of our foes does not end our work. We must prevent new lords from rising up, and we must defeat the traitorous Zero. To do this, we must build—and then nurture—our powers. And since I am putting thoughts to paper now, I wanted to write out the seven words we Intoners must know.

The first word we must know is "cooperation."

We Intoners possess immeasurable power. This, I am afraid, may lead you to place too much trust in yourselves. (And as we know, there is no power that does not fail its owner sooner or later.) But if we five combine our powers, I believe we can overcome anything. And if our own power is not enough, we can call on the strength of our allies, of the people who amass at our side. They may be singularly weak, but combined, they can blaze a trail to the future.

The second word you must know is "strength."

No matter what you believe or how just such belief may be, it cannot come to fruition without the power to make it so. Never cease polishing your skills with sword and song. Never cease inventing new strategies to battle. Think about how to make your nation stronger as a whole. Develop weaponry and train your soldiers. Above all, always be ready to wage war for what you believe.

The third word we must know is "wealth."

Powerful though you may be in battle, your people cannot survive without a prosperous nation to rely upon. Retain always a bountiful supply of the food and resources needed for life, for they are vital in developing your nation. Remember that true wealth cannot be taken—it must be grown. Tend crops. Raise animals. Find new lands. Engage in trade. And above all, do not concentrate your wealth in one area, but instead share it with everyone in your land.

The fourth word we must know is "wisdom."

We must study writings of the past, for the collected wisdom of those who came before lies within. And we must also study our world and the people we share it with, so as to be ever mindful of how little we truly understand of it. As the leaders of this world, we must establish houses of learning across the land. Wisdom is a powerful tool that enables people to consider the future, and laying the groundwork for it is among an Intoner's most sacred duties.

The fifth word we must know is "law."

The world is not filled with one kind of spirit. Some of the more foolish ones commit crimes, and there is a need to judge them for it. But we must not allow people to condemn others based on passing fancies—instead, the rule of law must be fitting and proper. The ability to judge all on equal footing is the only basis on which we can guide the world to its proper destiny. And finally, remember that all can choose the wrong path from time to time—even Intoners.

The sixth word we must know is "justice."

This is vital. As leaders and Intoners, we must build a palpably improved world. And to achieve that, we must have resolute and unshakable faith in our sense of justice. We must not give in to our own selfish interests. We must not ignore those who are suffering. We must not overlook the elderly, the young, or the weak. We must never forget that we exist for our people's sake. And we must carry these resolves with us always.

The final word we must know is "love."

You may not understand what it means yet, my sisters, but I implore you to remember it. All of the other words are but empty air without the concept of love behind them. Love is what this world needs, and it is what WE need. It is altogether possible, my dear Five, Four, Three, and Two, that I may die before you and thus I have written down these seven words. For while I want you to save this world, I also want you to be happy. I love you all.

Postscript

It has been three months since I wrote the words. My sisters are dead—killed by Zero, the betrayer. And yet, I do not feel the fault is hers alone. My sisters were tossed and twisted by the power of their songs, and now the world once again spins toward its own destruction. ...Where did I go wrong? ...Were my motives not pure? It matters not. Zero is coming for me, and it seems my punishment will be to die with such doubts in my mind. Please forgive me, my sisters. I will go to join you now.

ZERO Mikhail's Diary



The Land of Animals — January 12 — Sunny

Today, I went to the Land of Animals and it was GREAT! There was a big cat with fluffy hair, and an elephant with a short trunk, and a horse with a big long neck, and another horse that was covered in stripes!
We all played in the mud and chased each other around and it was a ton of fun, but the sun was dumb and hot and I got tired really fast. Boooooo!

The Land of Fish — February 17 — Rain

I've been on this island for a week. There's lots of fish everywhere! Big fish, and pretty fish, and flatfish, and fish with feathers, and arms, and legs, and stuff! Oh, and mackerel. I like mackerel. I want to go to the other islands but, I don't know how. Since it started raining, it's just been water all over the place.

The Land of Songs — April 19 — Cloudy

I saw some humans today! They all really like songs and sing pretty much all day long, even though everything kinda sucks for them at the moment. I even sang for a while too.
Their singing reminded me of Zero. It's funny—even though I forget a lot of stuff, I always remember her. I think it's because she was angry with me all the time. I wish she would have sung with me instead. I'm lonely, Zero.

The Land of Machines — May 1 — Clear

There are more humans here lately, and they're taking up more and more of the land. They broke up the forests and mountains and oceans, and now they just move these big metal boxes and dolls all over the place. The animals that used to live here are in trouble because they have nowhere to live now, but do they deserve the land more than others? I think about a lot now.

The Land of Wars — July 1 — Rain

The girl who fed me this morning says her nation is in a state of constant war. They kill each other from dawn until dusk, then sleep for a bit before starting all over again. Apparently it's been going on like this for decades. Later, I brought mackerel to the girl's house to thank her for breakfast, but she'd been blown to pieces by a bomb. Why couldn't I save her? Where did I go wrong?

The Land of Destinies — September 30 — Cloudy, with Scattered Showers

Another day of nothing but mechanical children. There used to be so many humans and now I can't find them without a long and painstaking search. There was an earthquake yesterday, accompanied by a bright light in the east—probably more explosions. Contaminated ash rained down, no doubt killing more people and animals. I just slept through it. It's not like I can do anything.

The Land of People — November 4 — Cloudy, with Occasional Snow

I came across my first human village in a long time. It was small—maybe a hundred all told—but they seemed hardworking and honest. When they saw me, they began to call me their "divine guardian," which mostly meant listening to them complain all day. It seems having someone to talk to is a big deal for them. I can empathize. I look back fondly on some of my conversations with Zero—they helped me feel like I wasn't quite so alone in this world.

The Land of Darkness — December 28 — Snow

For a long time, I experienced only failure.
But I will not quit. No matter how much injustice is in the world, I will not permit myself to surrender to it.
I'm not like Zero. I don't believe the world can be changed by destroying things or getting angry, but if this world can improve, no matter how insignificantly, then I must do whatever I can to help.

The Land of Light — January 21 — Fire

My body is very broken now. I can feel the holes in my memory increasing in number. But I don't need to fight anymore either... so it's okay. Are you proud of me, Zero? Did I do well?
Or would you yell at me like always? Ze... ro... I'll... see you ... soon.

Note: This Novella only makes sense in branch D. In all other branches, either Mikhail is dead or Zero is alive.

CENT

Novella – The Jewel within My Palm

Translation by kho-dazat



"Are you okay, Cent? You're not hurt anywhere, are you?" Said my mistress, the Lady Two, after felling the last of the monsters with her great sword. I knew she would ask; a disciple like me can fathom what the Intoner he serves might say before she says it.

"Not at all. Of greater concern is you, Lady Two..." The state of her own body was far more important than my own. After all, she had just finished slaying a Minotaur that was two... no, three times her size, and in the middle of a desert, no less. The sweltering sun rays and the merciless gales were just as much our enemies. In terms of unabated harshness, I could imagine no worse a battlefield in the entire world than the one we stood in now.

And yet all my Lady had to say was:

"I told you not to call me Lady! When we're alone, you promised to just call me Two!"

While puffing her cheeks out in annoyance. I would think my query in regards to the state of her health at the moment held more importance than that, but... the more I looked at those puffed up cheeks, I forgot my concerns, overwhelmed with the desire to poke them with my fingers since they were so cute.

"Forgive me. Two... are you uninjured?"

Her puffed up, pouty cheeks turned into an ear-to-ear smile in less than a millisecond.

The truth is I hadn't forgotten our promise. It's just that I like seeing her make that face, so I sometimes pretend that I have. By doing so, I get to see her make two adorable faces in her row: first the cheeks, then the smile. I admit to being a bit of a schemer.

I'd also like to mention that there are two reasons why I prefer to refer to her formally. The first is, that it is proper etiquette. That is why I insist she let me maintain airs before the eyes of others.

The second reason, which I haven't disclosed to her... is because her existence is one far more precious than my own. I should think any man, confronted by a woman so much more important than himself, would feel compelled to call her Lady.

That's right; Lady Two, you are a million times more important than myself, handsome and multi-talented as I am. I'll have you know, too, that there aren't many people out there I'd so easily accept as being above me, either. Indeed, in that sense you are exceedingly rare.

This would hold true even were you not an Intoner. Our relationship as Intoner and disciple is a mere pretense. For example, if my master were a different Intoner and not yourself, I assure you that our relationship would be purely professional. Were it Lady One or Lady Three, Lady Four or Lady Five... it would all be the same. I would never sacrifice all twenty-four hours of my day to them as I do for you. I'd put the bare minimum amount of work in and be adamant about taking time off. I would merely perform my duties as a disciple and nothing more.

You aren't important to me because you are an Intoner, but because you are you. And that is why I call you Lady, and always will, at least within my heart.

But I see that saying it aloud too often makes you look lonely. I love your puffy, pouty cheeks but I would never want to see you making a pained expression. So, I've been cutting down on the number of times I pretend to have forgotten, even if it is just a trifle.

Now then, Two... no, Lady Two. Uh, what was I going to call you by next? All this internal monologuing made me forget...

"Cent?" Your eyes peer up at me curiously. What a busy pair of eyes they are... shining with laughter, glinting with anger, widening in surprise. Perhaps you are the true schemer. Artlessly, without even the use of your songs... just by moving the muscles on your face, you've made such a prisoner of me.

"Cent! I can tell you want to mess with my cheeks again. Well, you can't! If you keep yanking on them, they'll get all stretched out!"

"That is certainly not my intention. I was merely trying to stimulate them, to improve blood flow. This is an exercise to improve your complexion."

"What? Really?! Wow! Do it more, then!"

...that was a fib. Forgive me, Lady Two! Your cheeks are just too soft and cute. I can't help myself.

"Q-quit snickering! I forbid it!"

Now you've gone all red. No matter what you say or do, you are so lovely that not just I, but all the people in our country simply adore you. Your people would do anything for you, and indeed they long to. But...

"If you continue exterminating monsters on your own like this, the troops will have no work to do."

"But I can't let them do something so dangerous. What if they get hurt?"

The soldiers wish to do all they can to protect their Intoner. Yet this is what she always says. Well, the truth is that Lady Two is capable of defeating numerous giants, bloodthirsty minotaur (albeit with my assistance). Even if they have the will to do so, none of them could do the same amount of work as she can on her own. If they are to truly be of use to her, they need to be trained to become stronger.

"This was a surprise, though. To think Minotaur would be nesting here..."

"There is a water source not far off. That's likely the reason they chose this location."

"Right... and human roads are nearby as well." It was the western caravan that came rushing to us, panicked, saying they'd discovered a monster nest. However, as they were too flustered to speak properly, they were unable to tell us what kind of monster they had been attacked by. Even if they could speak more clearly, though, the result would have been the same, as Lady Two rushed out before they'd even finished reporting. I imagine the thought of her people being attacked by monsters did not sit well with her.

"Those minotaurs were pretty tough. One, two, three... there were seven of them in all. I had trouble concentrating since I was so worried they might hurt you, Cent."

"A wound or two would be a fair price to pay to protect you."

Lady Two's expression told me she did not agree. Of course I knew she wouldn't.

"As you can see, however, I am without a scratch."

Still, it is the duty of a disciple to put everything on the line in order to defend their Intoner in the heat of battle. If I wasn't prepared to do that, I'd be a failure as her guardian.

"So, what should we do with these?"

"The Minotaur, you mean?"

"Even we can't carry all seven back. I'll take two... Cent, you can take one... yeah, three is about the most we can manage at once. So... what to do about the other four..."

I knew it was pointless to suggest leaving them behind. For Lady Two, this wasn't an option, since Minotaur meat is edible. Actually, it tastes a lot like buffalo. People in more fruitful lands might balk at the idea of eating monsters, but that's just what we do in this desert country. Of course, there are those even here that would resist the idea of eating Gigas or Goblins. But thanks to Lady Two's exhaustive culinary experiments, they've become regular fixtures on the dining table.

"Perhaps first we should move the remaining bodies back into their nest."

Unlike Sand Worms, Minotaur cannot live within the sands, so they tend to build their nests within the rocks that litter the desert. They are cool and shield the beasts from sunstroke.

"They should probably hold up for half a day within the shade. In the meantime we can enlist the soldiers to come carry them back. How is that?"

"Great idea! Cent, you are soooo smart! Okay, then let's move them, lickety-split!"

Lady Two's strong point is how quickly she acts after making up her mind. Lifting the gigantic Minotaurs as if they were as light as a feather, she indeed moved them back into their nests 'lickety-split'. I have to admit to still being impressed by the displays of her strength.

"Are you not tired at all?"

"Nope! I am A-OK! Oh, but... I'd like it if you did 'that' again."

"'That'?"

"You know, massage me like you did after the time I played with the kids." Ah... 'that'.

"As you wish."

A few days ago I had massaged her shoulders after she had finished playing outside with the children. Apparently she did not realize it herself, but they were very stiff.

Lady Two is in possession of muscles which quite exceed those of normal people's. How else could she lift the whole Minotaur over her head like that? If she doesn't take care to restrain her power, she can pull doors straight off their hinges or yank banisters right out of the ground. In fact, this happens fairly often. So when she plays with the children, it requires her utmost concentration so as not to hurt them. Restraining herself in this way puts more stress on her body than fighting Minotaur in the desert would, and after a day spent frolicking with the children her shoulders and arms are tense and she is extremely fatigued. Yet Lady Two does not try to cut down on the time she spends with the little ones. No matter how busy her day gets, she strives not to neglect them. That is how important they are to her; she considers them no different than her own flesh and blood sisters. They are her family.

Should one come down with a fever or get an upset stomach, she becomes so fretful she cannot eat. I try to tell her that small children often come down with fevers or throw up their food, and that skipping meals each time to nurse them isn't good for her health, but to no avail. Even though Lady Two understands what I tell her on an intellectual level, she's unable to control her feelings. All that matters to her is that they recover as soon as possible.

That all I am capable of doing in such times is endeavoring to relieve her stress by even a hair is honestly a bit frustrating, but...

"All better! That felt great, Cent. Thanks!"

"You are very welcome."

"Okay! Let's head back!"

Jumping to her feet, she resembled a little rabbit or squirrel. To be honest, sometimes I worry she'll take off running like one, never to return. Of course, I realize this is a groundless fear. She would never think to disappear somewhere, abandoning the country over which she governs...

"I'm glad I got to hunt these guys down before I had to leave the country."

...for she is always, always thinking first and foremost of the people under her care.

"Since pests like these inhabit the desert, I can't afford to leave very often."

"That's true. And it's never sure when you might have to leave since you must come when Lady One summons you."

"You're right..." Perhaps those were not the right words to say. For a moment, Lady Two's face became clouded with the thoughts of the enemy she would soon have to face. Even with my help, there was no doubt this would be a bitter battle for her.

Ah... please, do not make such an expression. Sorrow does not suit you.

"It's all right. What Lady One is working toward is a world in which everyone can live in peace. All the people of the world support you, their saviors, the Intoners. There is no way you'll be defeated."

"...right! If we work hard, everyone will become happy." The shadow on her face lifted a bit.

"And I will be ever by your side. No matter what the time or place, I live to protect you, Lady Two."

"Yes... stay with me forever. Promise me you will."

"Certainly." Finally, her smile returned. Yes... that is where it should always be.

"After the battle at the Cathedral City has ended... perhaps we should take a trip together." So that your smiles will become more frequent and joyous.

"Really?! Oh, but... I'd feel bad leaving everyone else behind..."

"How about this, then? We'll make it a journey to exterminate monsters. Soon now there will be none left in our country, so let us make it our mission to hunt down those in other lands."

"Oh, perfect! That will help everyone!" Yes, that is what I like to see. Your smile, as pure and innocent as a babe's. I would do anything to keep that smile on your face forever. To protect that smile, I would sacrifice everything.

"But what about the kids? I can't leave them all alone." You're such a worrywart, especially when it comes to the children. That's what I love about you, though.

"Why not entrust them to Lady One? There's nowhere safer on earth than the Cathedral City."

"That's true!"

"If we send a few soldiers from our country to accompany them, then it surely will not be a burden on Lady One."

"I'll ask her, then! And have her let us inspect the inside of the Cathedral, too." I'm glad. With this, the anxiety you have over the coming battle has diminished a bit, as have the clouds that hang over your heart.

"Right, then. We'll travel from one end of the world to the next, in hunt of monsters. You did say you wanted to tour the world together, just the two of us, did you not?"

"You remembered...?"

"Even if I forget what I was talking about five minutes ago, I'll never forget any of the precious words you've said to me, Lady Two." That's right. Even should I forget everything else, your smile would remain in my mind. It alone will never fade.

"Oh! You called me Lady again!" Nor would those adorable puffy, pouty cheeks.

"That's because we are in front of your subjects."

"We are?" I could see Lady Two's soldiers in the distance, kicking up sand as they ran toward us. I told them her safety was assured with me at her side and that they did not need to pursue us, but so concerned were they over their Intoner that they came chasing after us anyway. It's not like I could blame them. I understand very well how they feel.

"Perfect timing. We'll send them to carry back the other Minotaur."

"Great! If we get them all back now, it'll be just in time for dinner. What to make tonight... kebabs?

Or should we go all out and roast them whole?" Your expressions which change so rapidly. Each and everyone is so truly dear.

"Lady Two..."

"Yes?"

I just wanted to say your name, to see you turn around. No...

"Let's go home. Please, give me your hand."

I wanted to hold your hand in my own. I'll never let it go.

Ever.

OCTA

Novella – The Joy Of...

Translation by kho-dazat



I am known as Octa, disciple to the Intoner who reigns over the forest lands, Lady Three. Today I have accompanied her to the Cathedral City at the call of her elder sister, Lady One. This city is known as the birthplace of magic, and it is the bastion of both the knowledge and arts of the Old World.

Of particular note is its library which holds a truly impressive assortment of texts, both new and old, from the world over. Most are written in languages I cannot understand, but there are I few I can decipher. Take this one. It reads... Diogenes Laertius[1]? Is this an ancient history book, or perhaps a biography? I can understand the individual words but the contents are beyond me.

The next book I attempt to read is much easier to understand, not to mention considerably more interesting. It details the existence of an island nation far to the east that was known as the Land of Gold[2]. That is, they produced so much gold that they used it to build palaces and homes. What a dazzling place it must have been! I also learned of its ancient enjoyment techniques known as The 48 Hands[3]. Just 48? That seems a bit of a meager number for a country known for its richness in gold. Perhaps it's a misspelling and they truly meant The 4800 Hands? Not to brag, but I myself am the master of 666 enjoyment techniques, my proficiency in which is both a source of pride as well as my reason for living. Ho ho ho ho! Of course, even now I still practice all of them nightly. Before I've left this earth I'd like to increase that number to 6666. Ah, the path of self-joy is a long one, indeed!

But back to the books. How about this one? It appears to be on health. No... beauty techniques. It seems it is geared toward women. Let's see, now... it reads, how to become beautiful through pleasure? Well now, this is a subject right up my alley. Beauty concerns are of the utmost importance to any lady, and the concerns of ladies are also my own. Though Lady Three, already quite beautiful, isn't much interested in this sort of thing.

Still, I feel I must study this book in greater detail. I, Octa, always endeavor to make use of all my skills in order to give women the deepest enjoyment. While I'm able to bring them to ecstasy in about two seconds flat, I am trying to aim for more than just speed. Instead of resting on my laurels, I want to reach higher heights. To put it more succinctly, I want to become a pleasure athlete.

To accomplish that goal, studying is of the utmost importance. They say knowledge is the mother of all virtue, and if so, it must also be the mother of enjoyment. Which would make books something like the grandmother. All paths lead to joy.

Moving on to the next book, let's see here... it appears to be another book on health techniques. Forest Therapy is the title. Well now! This is required reading for someone who lives in a forest, like me.

Just as the name implies, the forest lands are mostly covered in thick woods. That said, it's easy to traverse through and is really rather relaxing. It's a nice place to indulge in some enjoyment, as well. Thanks to it being rather dark even during the day due to the shade, and the branches and bushes being good for concealment, you could carry on with any kind of pleasure you wish, be it self-joy or group joy. On beautiful moonlit evenings it's ideal for some night joy, as well. I can't think of a more ideal place to enjoy the outdoors. And to think, there are therapeutic techniques to be employed while in it, as well! Truly the definition of two birds with one stone.

I must inform Lady Three of my discoveries. Lately, she has been utterly obsessed with making dolls, and I'm a little concerned she is not attending to her health as she should. This is her regular routine, however. Once she becomes fixated on something she neglects to eat or even sleep. There was one occasion where she even

[1] Diogenes Laertius is a Greek philosopher.

[2] Japan was once known as The Land of Gold due to the amount of gold they used to produce and export until around the Edo period, apparently. In other words, Octa is referring to Japan.

[3] The 48 Hands are a series of sex positions, sometimes referred to as the Japanese Kama Sutra.

stopped cutting her hair. By the time I realized it had grown so long it covered the entire floor of her room like a carpet, with nary a place for me to step.

Apparently ever since she was young, Lady Three has liked to cut her own hair, but since taking up doll making she's mostly forgotten about it. While she does still enjoy playing with her scissors, it seems doll making has trumped even that in her mind. As a result, lately I have been the one trimming her hair.

On to the next book, then.

One would appear to be on the topic of social manners. How to Be a Better Speaker… is the title. I suppose it's a help manual for those who struggle in making conversation? Tips for making good first impressions, even if you're shy… the weather and food make good general topics, but avoid the subject of politics and religion… Sure enough. Talking about the weather and food make for a decent enough icebreaker. But neither topic comes close to the connection you'd make discussing your personal enjoyments! Indeed, pleasure talk makes for the greatest social lubricant. Well, to be sure, there are some who'd be made uncomfortable by such a topic, and it's wise to approach such subjects with a bit of care. Fortunately, I find most of the soldiers under the employ of Lady Three to be open to such discussions, however. On the nights they're up late keeping watch the conversation always seems to inevitably turn to them, perhaps to stave off sleepiness. Ho ho ho!

There are times Lady Three must lead us into battle. Since she quickly falls to sleep, I often have to find ways to entertain myself alone at the campground. Most of the time I participate in some self-joy, but occasionally I enjoy speaking with the soldiers accompanying us. I remember well the time I told them I had slept with a faerie woman. All their eyes went as wide as dish plates when they heard me. Oh, it was quite funny indeed! Hee hee!

"B-but how?!"

"Isn't that physically impossible?!"

"That's beyond all reason!"

"Don't tell me you shrunk yourself?!" It's true that those of the faerie race are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. In comparison, my member would seem colossal. I could understand why the soldier's struggled with the idea.

I spied one, however, who instead of looking mystified was nodding his head as if in understanding. When the others asked him why he didn't seem surprised, he replied in a perfectly even tone of voice:

"I just assumed he shoved the faerie up his asshole." Having said that, the wide eyes of the soldiers turned off of me and squarely onto him.

Without commenting on how accurate his assessment was, I have to say, I was quite impressed by his fluid way of thinking. I never thought I'd encounter such a like-minded person in a place like that. It was quite the happy occasion for me. Keep your thinking fluid and your member hard… that's my personal motto.

It would be most accurate to say that I consider every hole in the world a potential lover. Whether they belong to someone of a different race like the faerie woman is hardly of any concern. What seems unnatural to me is not being able to choose a partner or use my body freely.

"Master Octa, tell us how you managed it!" All the soldiers were looking up at me with faces shining with the light of curiosity. This is how I answered:

"Clear your mind of all mundane thoughts and you will find even fire cool."

This was apparently an old religious saying from a distant eastern country, but it perfectly described my point of view. Before my ardent will to feel pleasure, trivial matters such as mere differences in size hardly acted as a deterrent. In other words:

"It's a secret, my boys." Some things are even more exciting when left to the imagination, I find. Ho ho ho ho!

Ah, but I've gone on too long. I don't often get this opportunity, so I really should continue looking through these books. This next one is… ah, it appears to be a collection of famous old sayings.

"Toil conquered the word, unrelenting toil and want that pinches when life is hard." These seem to be the words of some poet of yore. I see... If you were to replace the word toil with pleasure, I would be in perfect agreement.

"The hand is the tool of tools." Oh, now these are wise words! Truly those of a most enlightened philosopher! Surely, he was one of the greatest minds of his time. Hands are indeed the greatest tool in the pursuit of pleasure. All manner of enjoyments can be had with a set of able fingers!

"Heaven doesn't make a man better than others, nor does it make a man worse than others.[4]" This is a saying for the ages. I, too, believe heaven has made no hole better or worse than the next. All holes are equal! In other words, allowing things like age, sex, race... even species dulls your ability to truly enjoy pleasure. Each hole has its own unique features and charms. Discarding your prejudice and liberally accepting every hole with open arms is the key to a truly enriched life. Ho ho ho!

Now it's about time to finish my reading. Soon Lady Three will awake from her nap; or rather, it'll be time for me to wake her. For as obsessive as she is about her interests when awake, once she falls asleep it's nigh impossible to rouse her. I do wish I could have found a book that might have appealed to her. I think it would be healthier for her to have a variety of interests as opposed to just one obsessive one, but I also know better than to think it's possible to change her nature.

Hm?! W-what is this book?!

It seems to be some sort of textbook, but on what subject? It doesn't seem to be about math, history, or science. Is it perhaps about astrology? No... but it does seem to concern stars.

Within its pages, I find text detailing an enormous hole that exists far, far off in the depths of the skies above. It is described as being able to absorb anything and everything, from gigantic beasts to monstrous boulders, even mountains, continents and other stars! It sucks up all kinds of matter with ease. To me, a man who considers all the holes in the world his lovers, to learn of a hole of that dimension... how I would relish the chance to engage it! A hole that sucks in everything would be the perfect challenge for Octa, the man who loves every hole! To pursue that passion, I would gladly travel to the ends of the earth and even venture into the heavens!

I must train even more devotedly for that day. To start with, I'll engage in some special pleasures tonight with Lady Three. Exhausting every technique, I'll bring her holes unparalleled enjoyment!

As they say, a journey of a thousand joys begins with the first step.

[4] Here are the quotes Octa is blaspheming and who they are attributed to:

Clear your mind of all mundane thoughts and you will find even fire cool.
- Words attributed to a Buddhist monk as the shrine he was in burned down around him.

Toil conquered the word, unrelenting toil and want that pinches when life is hard. – Virgil

The hand is the tool of tools. – Aristotle

Heaven doesn't make a man better than others, nor does it make a man worse than others. - Yukichi Fukuzawa

The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. - Lao Tzu

DECADUS

Novella – Everything Is for You

Translation by kho-dazat



"Could you die for me?"

These were the first words my mistress, Lady Four, ever spoke to me. I still remember vividly the sound of her voice, the expression on her face, even the clearness of her eyes as she looked up at me. As soon as she had finished speaking, she made a face, as if she were looking at something strange. She gazed at me for a long time; I think perhaps she was still a little unsure of what a disciple was.

I, of course, understood my duty completely. It was to never leave my Intoner's side, to serve her faithfully, to withstand the very fires of hell to protect her... the very fires of hell... fire... burning... ooh!

Uh, erm. That is to say, that was how I understood it. But I wasn't yet sure what Lady Four's exact expectations of me were, this being our first meeting. As a result, I found myself unable to answer her at once. But Lady Four did not get angry. Instead, as if blaming herself, she continued thus:

"Oh... I'm sorry. What I meant was, would you be willing to die for an Intoner, one responsible for protecting this world? That is... could you put your life on the line for the sake of this world? I-I didn't mean you should say you'd want to die for me personally..."

This time I answered promptly. "Yes, of course. If it is to serve you, I am ready to withstand any trial, no matter how torturous... torture... ooh!"

"Decadus? Are you all right?"

"Y-yes! I'm just fine." Lady Four shows such concern for others.

"What I can't accomplish alone, we can surely accomplish together, as a pair... I think a disciple's most important duty toward his Intoner is to act as a partner."

Furthermore, she is incredibly intelligent and high-minded. I am proud to serve such an outstanding person.

"Ah! But don't misunderstand me, okay? When I say partner, I don't mean it in a weird way! I'm not the kind of person who interprets everything in only the most vulgar way... like my younger sister. Oh, but I mean..."

"Of course, I will serve you in full capacity in that area as well!"

Yes. To serve as the partner of an Intoner in the bedroom is another of a disciple's duties. But is it truly all right for someone such as myself to be Lady Four's lover? Before a personage such as herself, I am as insignificant than a stone in her path... one to be stepped on, or kicked... kicked... ooh! Kick me, please!

"I-I just said, that isn't how I meant it! Are you s-stupid or something?! I'm different! We may be siblings, but don't put me in the same category as my wanton, breast-obsessed little sister! I'm completely different than that girl! I think with my head... not my loins! T-that's right! What's important to me is your heart, not your body! Understood?!"

"Yes! Of course, my lady!"

I knelt at Lady Four's feet and earnestly begged her forgiveness for the sin of having upset her.

"Please excuse my impudence! I have not enough words to apologize to you! I will accept any punishment, however cruel, you deem fit to give me! Make it as harsh as you desire! I don't mind if you kick me, or even whip me! Kick me... whip me... whip... ooh! Now, my lady! Do not hesitate! Punish your Decadus!"

"H-hold it, raise your head off the ground! I don't think you did anything worth being punished over..."

"No! No! I insist! To have soured your mood... I am a failure as a disciple! Punish me, please!"

"I said it was all right! I'm not going to punish you!"

"...you're not?"

You're not going to whip me? Or even give me just a little kick? To leave me high and dry like this... it's torturous! Wait. Torture? Oh! I get it! Lady Four, I see what you're doing! This is your punishment! What a sublime... sublime type of torture!

"It's okay already, so get up! Are you listening to me?"

Ah... my lady! Even though this is our very first meeting, it's as if we've known each other for years. For you to have grasped my desires so completely! No words could express the depth of gratitude I have for being lucky enough to serve under such an amazing Intoner like yourself!

"Could you die for me?"

The second time Lady Four asked me that question was just after she'd taken control of the mountain lands, and we were setting out to exterminate monsters together.

Even after we'd dethroned the corrupt lord, the mountain lands were infested with all manner of violent, vile beasts. The many hiding spots the terrain supplied made it their ideal environment to nest in. As expected of her, Lady Four did not hesitate to set out to subdue these beasts herself in order to assuage the troubled populace. However, the soldiers serving her protested strongly. Even if the chances were one in a million, they could not bear the thought of something happening to their precious Intoner.

"Thank you for your concern. But it's quite all right! I have the power of song, and my loyal disciple to protect me."

Lady Four gave the soldiers a smile before turning to me. That's when she repeated that question.

"Could you die for me?"

I understood she had asked it in order to relieve the soldiers. As expected of my kind and considerate lady. Without hesitation, I replied:

"Of course! I will defend you with all my strength. No matter what terrible beasts assault us, I will use my own body as a shield to protect you... a shield that gets hit... and stabbed... ooh!"

"Decadus?" For a moment I thought I saw Lady Four make a troubled expression, but it must have just been because of my poor word choice. Thinking what I had said was not yet enough to put the soldiers at ease, I continued:

"To protect you, I will become anything.
Even your shoes... no, the soles of your shoes, under your feet!"

"I'd prefer you didn't."

Apparently, Lady Four did not wish for me to become the soles of her shoes.

On the mountain roads, monsters appeared one after the other. It was an extremely dangerous place, and the walk up to it hadn't been easy, either. We'd been in constant danger of falling rocks and precarious cliffs the whole way; the former lord apparently had not cared at all about making things safer for his people.

"I'll command the soldiers to keep things safe and clear on the paths leading in and out of the city. As it is, there's no way the elderly or young children could traverse these roads. And to make sure no monsters get near, I'll have to set up a constant, all-night patrol. Oh, but perhaps I'll leave the path leading to the shrine infested... to prevent thieves and intruders."

We weren't just exterminating monsters. Lady Four was using this opportunity to survey the terrain and come up with new strategies and plans. No matter what the time or situation, her heart was always full of concern for the people. It was if she were born to lead them.

"Still..." Coming to a stop, Lady Four gave a sigh.

"I knew the prior lord was a villain, but to let things worsen to this state... how cruel!"

"Y-yes... so very... cruel... ooh!"

"What?"

"N-no. Just a slip of the tongue..."

Lady Four gave me a suspicious look, but said no more. It wasn't the time to, considering a new bunch of monsters had rushed in from the side. We assumed our battle stances.

Just as I had promised before the soldiers, I became a wall between the beasts and Lady Four. I also served as her sword, slaying many of them for her. Though I prefer not to fight with weapons. Instead I utilize my own arms and legs. As opposed to a sword or spear, when you use your own body to attack you get a better feel of just how much damage you're inflicting upon the enemy. And also, how much damage you yourself are receiving. With each blow of my fist, the shock from the impact travels from my hands to my brain... the stronger the foe, the more clear and painful the feedback to my hands and feet. For example, were I fighting a golem with a hard, stony body... the pain my fists would receive would be... would be... ooh! Just imagining it, I... I can hardly...!

"You seem happy, Decadus."

"Using my body to protect you is my greatest pleasure, Lady Four! For your sake, I wouldn't mind it even if I were split in two... split in... two... ooh! I can't take it!"

"Really? It's not the pain in your fists making you happy?"

"H-how did you...?!"

"If you want to keep things like that a secret, try not mumbling so loud!"

Something in Lady Four's voice turned very cold.

Ever since we'd returned from that mission, I got the feeling Lady Four was speaking to me less. I also felt her eyes had become harder, chillier. Not that I was dissatisfied with that. Just the opposite, really! Oh, her gaze that seemed to pierce me like a blade made of freezing ice! Piercing me deeply... deeply... ooh! To think Lady Four could torture me so effectively without laying a single finger on me. It was almost intolerable! What a gift she had for exciting me!

Ah, but excuse me. Putting that aside, lately I've felt as if Lady Four is trying to avoid eye contact with me. Perhaps it is just my imagination? No... I don't think so.

What's important to me is your heart... that's what Lady Four told me when I first met her. In other words, even if we do not speak... or our eyes never meet... what Lady Four desires is a disciple who can understand her heart. To be unable to do so would make me unfit to serve her.

Though I am ever at her side, Lady Four behaves as if she were alone. But this makes sense! After all, a disciple is meant to act as his Intoner's shadow. A shadow to be stepped on... ooh... to be stepped on... Lady Four, how is it you understand me so completely? How blissful it is for me to serve such a perfect master. My joy is so great it almost scares me!

"Could you die for me?"

The third time she said those words was quite recently. It had been the first time in a long while that she had spoken to me. Even if I don't say it, you must know my life is yours. All of me exists solely for your benefit.

"Of course! For your sake, Lady Four, I would endure pain worse than death.
Worse than... death... ooh!"

"...I see."

Lady Four replied curtly, before turning her back on me. I thought I heard her whisper "Just die now, then.", but the voice in which she said it was so much lower than her usual pitch, I may have been hearing things.

Actually, it must have been the creaking of her bedroom door I heard instead. It's a very, very old door. Tomorrow, after Lady Four awakens, I'll have to take the time to grease its hinges.

After the door had closed with a loud creak, I silently bowed in its direction.

"Good night, my lady. Sleep well..."

Then, as I did every night, I sat before the door to keep watch.

In addition to being old and noisy, my lady's bedroom door did not do much to muffle the sounds from within. To be frank... I could easily hear everything going on inside it, especially as the night grew later and more still.

As I sat on my knees before that door, I often hear the sounds of the bed frame creaking and my lady panting. It does make me feel a bit guilty, especially whenever I hear her call out sweetly for her older sister in her sleep.

There are those amongst the soldiers who spread rude rumors that she's trying to be seductive, offering herself up to me... but that is incorrect! Completely and utterly!

To have me sit and listen before that door... to even leave it unlocked as she does... none of that suggests seduction. She could take me into her room at any time, which is exactly why she leaves me out of it. Furthermore, she makes me sit upright on the cold floor... which, as my legs grow ever number... the sounds of her voice crying out and the rustling of clothing enters my ears...

What perfect... artful teasing! What perfect... masterful torture!

Just after I had first begun to serve her, I often imagined being smashed under her cold heels, or being torn up by her long, sharp nails... but now I realize how shallow those fantasies were.

I don't require the feel of her heels or nails. Between Lady Four and I, there is no need for physical contact. Lady Four bestows upon me joyful pain enough without it. This is what she meant by being partners! We are truly connected, heart-to-heart!

Without ever touching her person, or even my own... no, exactly because we do not touch, these maddening pleasures continue indefinitely! Outside of her door, teased by my growing lust, I am earnestly tortured... earnestly ignored... all throughout the night. I wish time could stop, that dawn might never come, so that this could continue eternally. Oooooh!

Just imagining it, I... I can hardly... oooooh!

What... what... torture! What extreme torture! No... no... this is a reward! Being left here, cruelly neglected... that itself is my reward!

Ah! Could there be anything more pleasurable?!



DITO

Novella – This Repulsive World

Translation by kho-dazat

I hear the sound of the waves. It annoys me, but this being a seaside country, there's no getting away from it, save for sleep. Another morning… I think wearily to myself. I wish the sun had never risen. Then, I wouldn't have to go through another exasperating day… but no. If the sun had never risen, it would still be night. Nights are worse…. because, at nights, I have to…

I stop thinking before the bad memories fully came back to me. But just the hint of them made my whole-body shudder. That's when I heard her voice.

"Dito?"

The same voice as in the memories I was trying to avoid. I should have tried to feign sleep a little longer… this woman is as dense as a brick, yet surprisingly sensitive to my movements. This… sow-like woman.

"Hmm? Five… up already?"

I make a show of rubbing my eyes as if I'd only just woken up.

"Dito, continue sleeping."

Ah, if I could, I would! I'd actually prefer never to wake up again, if it meant one less night of those huge bags of meat suffocating me…

"It's because you're being so noisy, Five."

Still, I can't let my guard down. Who knows what she'd try to do to my defenseless body… not that things go much better when I'm conscious.

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"It's okay…"

Like hell she's sorry. She's not really. She's only pretending to be considerate. It's all surface-level with her.

"Going through your wardrobe again? This early in the morning?"

"There's not enough time in the day for me! I've got to get as early a start as possible."

"Well, maybe if you didn't change your clothes three or four times in one day, you'd have more time. Couldn't you just wear one outfit until evening?"

Besides, there's no masking your insides. No matter what you wear, you're still jumping a fat lump of flesh. Wrap yourself up in ribbons all you like… in the end, a pig is still a pig.

"I can't do that! How could I wear just one dress when I have so many?!"

It's almost sort of tragic how someone could have so much to wear yet so little that actually suited them. Strike that… it's hilarious.

"Tell me, Dito, what about these?"

I can tell you already they won't look good. Don't you realize those layered gowns just make you look even meatier? Or that those woolen ones make you seem twice as fat? I'll bet you haven't the foggiest idea that your favorite style of clothing, with all the lace and frills, looks worst on you. Like a ham wrapped up as a gift. Talk about bad taste.

"Maybe you don't like any of these dresses because they seem hard to take off me?"

That's not it at all! Ugh, you're so gross! Don't touch me! …I want to scream, but of course I can't. No upsetting the Intoner, now. I am her loyal disciple… I must act in a way that pleases her.

"No… that's not what…"

This is what you like, right? Me acting like a cute little boy, blushing and shy?

"Or maybe you'd prefer I wore nothing at all…"

"I-I..." Of course, I wouldn't! Why would I?!

"I don't mind doing it clothed, either..."

"But..."

Whether you're naked or clothed, I don't want to do it with a pig!

"I just need to be on top in that case. Or we could do it standing, from behind..."

"I said I don't...!"

I don't want to have sex with you! The position isn't the issue here!

"There's no need to be shy..."

Believe me, I'm not. I'm rejecting you from the bottom of my heart!
...I could never say that. Not as long as I'm her disciple.

"Dresses! Weren't we picking out dresses?!"

Face as red as an apple, I act flustered. The tone of my voice has become high-pitched as I indicate toward the dresses. So, you enjoy this kind of behavior, huh? You hag.

"How about this one? This middle one, here? It's dazzling!"

"Forget the dresses for now Dito. Come here..."

"Well, then, how about this one? Check out the detail on this embroidery! You haven't worn this one yet, have you?"

I slip out of her arms, though I know my escape will be short-lived. She likes it when I play hard-to-get, anyway. It's more exciting for her if her prey tries to get away. Entering her dressing room, I let out a big sigh. The other disciples must have the patience of saints! That or their Intoners are considerably saner. Maybe they all just have it better than me.

Those two lovebirds from the desert kingdom seem pretty happy. It's like they're walking through a perpetual flower field. It's embarrassing to watch. A disciple's duty is to satisfy the sexual needs of his Intoner. What's the point of acting like you're in love? What kind of freak would fall in love with an Intoner in the first place? Oh, but right... that disciple is a total idiot. No wonder, then. A waste, though, to be so handsome and yet so dumb. I wonder what's harder, being ugly and intelligent or handsome and dumb? In any case, god seems to be stingy when it comes to giving out good looks and smarts at the same time.

I continue pretending I'm looking for a dress. I make some noise pulling and pushing things off the rack, lest the pig woman checks in on me. I'm careful not to tear any fabric, though. Thinking she might get sick of hearing the same sounds, I pull one of her gaudier dresses inside out, but soon realize how pointless what I'm doing is and give up on it. Instead, I study the inside-out dress. Its shiny fabric can't be seen through the back, and the reversed stitching reminds me of veins. It's much prettier this way.

I sort of like things inside-out like this. I wish you could do the same thing to humans; just stick your hands down their throats and yank them clean inside-out. Then all their organs and stuff would-be right-on display. Imagine if they were still digesting? Then you could see all the food they'd eaten right there in their stomachs. That'd be one heck of a sight. Even that pig woman, if you turned her inside out... she might be cuter then. Instead of the white of her skin, imagine seeing the red and pink of her facial muscles. And her entrails, dangling invitingly... that'd be pretty sexy. I wonder how a moan might sound from an inside-out throat?

...I'm getting kind of hot and bothered.

Time to stop daydreaming. Got to head back into the thick of it sooner or later. Searching for a dress was just a desperate bid to save time. My fate can't be avoided. Carrying a dress she'd bought recently from an eastern salesman, I leave the dressing room. This Intoner likes nothing better than a performance, and the sight of me as her clown. She's got to have some screws loose, all right... but all the same. As I expected, her expression is one of satisfaction. I wish she'd learn to smile a little less vulgarly.

"This dress is lovely, too. But so is this one! Oh, I'm at such a loss..."

I'm the one at a loss here. It's tough watching a woman be so engaged in picking out clothes that don't suit her. Pretty depressing.

"I wish I had three or four bodies. Then I could wear these all at once!"

“Three or four of you?! Are you serious?!”

“Of course.”

“...that would be a nightmare!”

I couldn’t help but blurt out my true thoughts. Three or four of her?! That would herald the end of days. I’d sooner hang myself.

“I think it’s a splendid idea. Next time I see my sister One, I’ll ask her if she doesn’t know a spell that could do that.”

Does that mean we’ll have to go see her soon? Man. The eldest Intoner has a sharp mind. She makes me nervous... I’ve only met her a few times, but something about her rubs me the wrong way. After all, she was the one to command meatball here to rule over this seaside land. Can’t thank her enough for that, now can I...

“If there were three of me, I wouldn’t have to worry about what to wear. I could eat three times my full, as well!”

“You already eat enough for three people as it is.”

“Oh, I do not!”

Oh yes, you do! Make it more like five or six. She eats so much I’m surprised the chefs here haven’t died of exhaustion yet!

“When the cooks ask if you’d prefer meat or fish for dinner, you always say both.”

“Okay, my dear Dito. That’s still only two people’s worth.”

“Then when they ask how you’d like your meat prepared, roasted or sautéed or boiled, you say all three!”

“Well, when you put it like that...”

“And then when they’d ask how you’d like your fish, grilled or baked or fried...?”

“I suppose I ask them to prepare all three. Oh no, now I’m hungry. Is breakfast ready yet?”

“Five, your gluttony knows no bounds...”

If I could, I’d ask her smart older sister for a spell to diminish her appetite.

“I can’t wait for spring. Then I can go searching for scrumptious new things.”

Hunting and foraging was a hobby of hers. But scrumptious is not the word I would use to describe what she brings back...

“You mean things not fit for human consumption.”

“Oh, but Two cooks them wonderfully! She has a knack for making delicious meals out of them.”

“You don’t deny that they’re usually inedible, though.”

How could she? Stuff like troll, orc, and goblin meat... even sandworms. That’s called monster hunting, not ingredient gathering.

“Two makes goblin brain into a delicious pate. Then there’s her spiky lizard stew, and her pickled six-eyed monster fish...”

No sane person would eat any of that crap. Never mind their twisted libidos, there’s also something seriously wrong with the Intoner taste buds, too.

“I guess you could consider it gourmet eating?”

“You think so?”

“Sure, dining on the food you risked your life procuring could be a whole new culinary trend. I’ll pass on it, though...”

My measured response was due to my Intoner’s influence. I really wanted to ask her what kind of animal would ever consider eating the crap she was describing.

As I was thinking that, my eyes were forced back on her. I hate it when she makes me do that.

"Um... Five?

I could feel my face going slack as I looked up at the pig woman.

"What are you thinking right now...? Something strange...?"

Like I needed to ask. I'd know that lustful expression from a mile away.

"Not at all..."

Yeah, right. Sex is all you think about.

"H-how about breakfast? You're hungry, right?"

"Yes. I'm going to dig in right now..."

"Five! Wait-"

Aren't I a tragic hero? Forced to act in this charade?

"No, I won't wait... not anymore..."

It's in an Intoner's nature to be perverted and lewd. Perhaps it's connected to their singing abilities. As if that makes any sense at all... How can I sympathize with a nymphomaniac who gives me no peace, day or night? I can't. No matter what the circumstances may be.

"Why are we doing this first thing in the morning...?"

I'm annoyed by my own complaining. I should know there's no point.
I almost want to knock my own mouth shut!

"Because of your cute, sleepy little face..."

"That makes no sense."

"Don't you like sleeping with my big breasts as a pillow?"

Ahhh... I give up. I wish she would at least stop licking me all over like that. It makes me feel all gross and sticky. It's the worst. She's got no technique, either. The smell of her saliva, her body fluids... I want to throw up. I wish I could... I'd feel better for it. But that would anger her, for sure. Her voice is what I really can't stand. Sounds like someone strangling a chicken. This is the pits. My body is all sticky, my ears full of that awful sound, and those two sacks grinding against my stomach as she writhes on me... I can't think of a worse torture than this. I wonder if that old man with the rings wouldn't switch with me. I'm sure he wouldn't mind being this woman's partner... seems like he'll do anything with a hole. There's probably no man more suited toward being a disciple than that one. I'd like a spell to make three or four of him. Hey, that's not a bad idea. I'll ask big sis One about it myself, next time I see her...

God, when are you going to be done?! You're so heavy. Get off already, you hag! I wish I could kill you! There's no way I could though. I've already tried to. But when I went to stab her from behind...

"What are you doing, Dito? Naughty boy."

The moment I heard her voice, my sword was at my feet. My hands had lost the strength to grip it. No disciple can defy their Intoner. No matter what. I learned the truth that day... just remembering what happened makes me want to die. I want to die.

Why did I have to be her disciple? Why couldn't I have gotten a different Intoner? I'd have liked to serve under another one instead. But maybe they're all the same... who knows? Still, no one could be worse than her. Those two in the desert seem happy, the old man is having fun... it's not fair that only I have to suffer. Hm? Speaking of which, wasn't there another one of us... the idiot, the old man, me, and... ugh, I forgot. Oh well.

I wish she'd finish already. I've already counted all the cracks in the ceiling. I really don't want to have to get started on the walls...

"No... not yet...!"

Not yet what? It's all the same in the end, no matter how many hours you're at it. It's not like you feel anything. To be so lustful yet unable to feel a thing... on that count alone, I pity you. Poor thing... nah, you deserve it.

"My dear, sweet Dito... don't make that face."

What face? Am I making a face? Whatever it is, it must be to your liking.

"If your appetite is as much as three people's, Five, your lust is equal to thirty."

"My... what praise!"

"I'm not praising you..."

"Good boy... let me reward you. Where do you want it next?"

"That's a punishment, not a reward."

"Oh? You prefer to be punished?"

Not really, but it's all the same in the end. This is torture.

"Why are you so lustful, Five?"

"Am I? Really?"

You don't even realize it? Well, I suppose it's more than a simple case of lust for you... An Intoner's libido is stronger than a normal human's. But you're even more different. No matter how many positions you try or how many hours you spend doing it, it will never feel good for you. Do you think sleeping with lots of people will fix that? You're not satisfied with your dresses because none of them suit you. Do you think new ones will change that? You know that no one would serve you if you didn't brainwash them. Do you think you'll ever find someone who honestly loves you?

Unfortunately, there is no cure for your lack of sensation. No dress will ever look good on you and nobody on earth is crazy enough to love you. My poor little Intoner... serves you right! ...hm? I feel a crease in my brow. Am I frowning? I touch my forehead, cheeks, and mouth. I'm frowning all right. But how? Five would never allow me to frown...

"What's wrong?"

"Oh..."

"It's not like you to space out in bed like that."

I'm a little shocked, to be honest. But Five quickly regains her composure. Before I know it, she's back to her gluttonous old self. I can tell because my voice and facial muscles are going out of my control, just as usual.

"Don't be mean... I have matters on my mind, as well."

"Are you mad?"

"No..."

You're lying. You must be, or else why is my voice coming out so soft? Why is my face contorted in fear? Are you mad I interrupted your reverie? Or that I noticed you were distracted? Disciples cannot disobey their Intoners. That's right... I can't raise so much as a finger against this woman. I am made to act the way she pleases, to say words that delight her. I am a perfect slave.

I remember you once said this to your kind elder sister: "I love this boy with all my heart. Every last bit of him! Even his mean and mischievous parts." Who wouldn't love a boy who'd do anything they wanted? You like the mean and mischievous parts of me? Please. You regulate just how mean I am, and never allow it to surpass your expectations. Any part of me that doesn't fall in line with your image of me, you suppress. The proof of that is in my inability to utter a single word of truth to you, even now.

"Let's continue..."

"You're not done yet?!"

I'm not really surprised. I'm just being made to act like I am. My eyes become wide on their own; I didn't will them to. I just lay back and let it happen.

"Just kidding..."

I know you are. I know all of you, after all; your lies, your emptiness, your stubbornness, your desire for control. And you know, I don't hate the ugliness inside your heart. I can forgive your rotting insides, because...

I'm your disciple.

Mikhail's Novella – Our Mistake

Translation by kho-dazat



"Wah!" I jolted awake, even though it wasn't morning yet and I was still sleepy. It was because something hit me real hard under my chin, where it's sensitive. Oh... it was Zero's leg!

"Zero! Zero! What's wrong?"

I nudged her with my nose.

"Are you hurt somewhere? Are you in pain?"

She must really be suffering if she's writhing like this in her sleep! Do her wounds hurt so bad that she feels them even in her dreams?

"Zero! Hey, Zero!"

"...I'm tired... lemme sleep..."

"But you're in pain! You're in pain!"

"Shut up. And I always tell you... don't always repeat what you say like that... it's irritating..."

Zero's voice sounds super annoyed. Is that also because she's in pain... It's not just that she's grumpy 'cuz I'm interrupting her sleep, is it?

"What can I do to help you? Tell me, Zero!"

I hate seeing Zero hurt! I just hate it! Seeing her hurt makes my chest feel all hurty inside!

"What will make you feel better?"

"Huh...? Ahh... I'll just eat a bunch of meat... and sleep it off... that'll do the trick..."

"So you'll feel better if you eat some meat?"

"Yeah... now let me sleep..."

"Okay! I got it!"

I see! So, she'll feel better if she fills her tummy with meat! That makes perfect sense! I always feel better with a full belly, too!

"I'll go hunt some meat for you then, okay? Okay?"

"Whatever... and don't... repeat yourself... "

"Zero?" No answer.

"Did you pass out?! Are you okay?! Are you okay?!"

I could hear her snoring. She's just asleep. Being careful not to wake her, I sneak out of the cave we were taking shelter in. It was still dark out, but the moon was nice and bright, making it easy to see. While Zero is sleeping, I'll get her some meat to eat in time for breakfast!

I hope I can find some real yummy meat! Meat so good it'll make Zero all better in no time! Meat that will make her feel like she gained a level with a single bite!

In other words... magical meat! I'm going to find Zero some magical meat!

...but where does magical meat come from? I took to the air but didn't know where to start searching.

I looked down at the ocean with the moon reflected on its surface. And I thought. I thought real hard!

Meat... meat... ocean... meat... ocean meat...

Ocean meat?! Oh! I see lots of fish swimming around just under the waves. They look real pretty, shining silver in the moonlight. Could they be... magical? Should I catch some?

But wait! No! Zero doesn't like fish. I remember having caught a bunch for her one day and she made a face at me. When I asked her if she didn't like fish, she looked troubled and said:

"I can't eat mackerel..." I think she whispered about it making her remember something. Maybe a time she ate mackerel and got real bad food poisoning. I wouldn't want to remember that, either!

Okay, so fish is no good. If she eats something she doesn't like she'll just feel worse! So I should look for something on land.

I flew away from the ocean. Beating my wings as hard as I could, I raced to find something before sunrise. Before I knew it, I was in the Desert Country. Wow, that was fast, even for me!

Look at all this sand! This desert is almost as big as the ocean!

But even though it was big, I couldn't find anything to eat there. If it were like the seashore, I could at least find some crabs or something, but no. I looked all over and couldn't find any meat, just some humans.

Well, aren't humans also made out of meat? So I guess I did find some, but I don't like to eat anything shaped like Zero. I'm sure Zero wouldn't, either. So I kept looking for meat that wasn't a fish or a human.

I decided to fly somewhere very, very distant. I mean, it makes sense for something magical to be far away from where you are, right? If you didn't have to travel for it, it couldn't be very magical, could it? Nothing you can get a hold of so easily should be, don't you think?

I flew and flew until I started feeling pretty pooped. I looked around to see where I was, when...

"Ow ow ow ow!" I hit my head on a cliff! Since I was looking down I didn't see it coming. Zero always tells me to pay more attention when I'm flying. Oh, I'm in the Mountain Country! No wonder, then. Wow, and look at all the meat! Cows and sheep and mountain goats all over the place! Wow! Wow! Wowie! I should have come here straight off the bat.

Okay, I'll catch me a cow, then. With this many around, it'll be easy pickings!

Hee hee! I caught the biggest cow I could find! This sure is swelled!

...come to think of it, I haven't eaten since this morning. I'm hungry.... and I just love beef!

"I'm gonna dig in!" Mmm! It's so yummy! It just about melts in my mouth! So good! So good! This might be the best cow I've ever eaten!

"I can't believe I ate the whole thing!" Oh no! It wasn't supposed to be for you, dummy! Dummy! Zero was supposed to eat it!

"I'll catch another one! I'll catch the next biggest cow and bring it straight back to Zero! Straight back to Zero! ...huh?" I was gonna go catch another cow, but when I turned around I saw two humans looking up at me. They looked so sad! It was a little old grandma and a little old grandpa. They had tears in their eyes!

I suddenly remembered that Zero once told me that people have these things called farms. Since there are no fields to grow wheat in the Mountain Country, they mostly raise animals here.

Could this... be a farm? And did I... just eat that old couple's cow? I did, didn't I...!

"Waaah! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" It's not right to steal other people's food! It's not right!

Looking for meat that wasn't fish... or people... or belonged to people... I flew off somewhere else. A place without many humans would be ideal. That way there'd be less of a chance I'd steal their food. I don't want to bother or hurt anybody.

A place without many people, but not devoid of life either, like in the desert...

I found myself in the Forest Country. I'm sure I can find some meat that doesn't belong to anybody here! I heard birds chirping all around me. The forest is full of animals!

I try landing. Trees make it really hard to get on the ground. I hate getting branches all stuck in my craw, too. The sound they make when they snap off is just awful!

"Hey! Watch where you're landing!" Hm? Did I hear a voice telling me not to land? Was it my imagination?

"Hey! Dumb-ass!" Oh, good. He wasn't talking to me. I'm a dragon, not an ass.

"Can't you hear me?! You stinky, filthy, ugly dragon!"

"What? Is there a dragon other than me in this forest? Where is he?"

"I'm talking about you, stupid!" A little creature came buzzing before my eyes. Did he just call me smelly? And dirty? And...

"I'm not ugly! I'm not ugly! You're mean!"

"Yeah, sure, okay! Let me correct myself, then: you're a beastly, hideous, stupid-looking excuse for a dragon!"

"He-day-us? I don't know what that means, but I bet it's something not nice! What are you, anyway?"

"You're a dragon and you've never seen a faerie before? So you don't just look stupid... you really are stupid! Wouldn't the world be better off if you just dropped dead?"

"You shouldn't say stuff like that! It's bad! It's bad!"

"I'm sorry, but haven't you ever heard the saying, only death can cure the fool? Really... just die!" I thought he might just be playing around, but now I'm really starting to think this faerie is out to hurt my feelings!

"Stop that, you! This dragon is right. You shouldn't say such terrible things!" Oh, here comes another faerie! I think this one's a girl.

"Hello, little dragon. What have you come here for?"

"I'm looking for some magical meat!"

"Is that right? Well... you're in luck! There happens to be some, right up there." The girl faerie pointed to a round looking thing hanging high on a tall tree. It looked about the size of Zero's head, maybe a little bigger. It was much smaller than I expected!

"That's magical meat? But it's so small!"

"It may be small... but it's truly magical!"

"Really? Well... if you say so!"

"Trust me! And listen... it's stuck very firmly to that tree, so make sure it pull it as hard as you can! Understand?"

"I do! Thank you!" So magical meat grows from trees! Who'd have thought it? Hm? Do I hear buzzing?

"Hurry, now! Grab that meat!" The faeries were cheering me on from below, so I took the meat in my mouth and pulled it off the tree!

"...ow ow ow ow!" All of a sudden, the inside of my mouth started stinging all over!

"Aha ha ha! He fell for it! I can't believe it!" A bunch of little needles are stinging my mouth all over! Oh, it hurts! It really hurts!

"How do you like the taste of beehive, baby? It's tasty, ain't it? Bwa ha ha ha!" You tricked me! You meanies! ...I wanted to say, but I couldn't.

"Poor 'lil baby dwagon! Stupid 'lil baby! Hah hah!" Ow! Ow! Ow! The bees are chasing after me! It's not my fault, guys! Stop! Stop!

I escaped as fast as I could!

I flew and I flew and I flew... and soon I was back by the ocean. The bees weren't following me anymore... thank goodness!

Why did those faeries do something so mean to me? They're so small and cute...

Maybe I knocked over a tree when I landed? And they got mad and punished me? That must be it. I mean, who'd be mean for no good reason?

The sun was already beginning to set. It dyed the sky and ocean bright red.

"Zero must be wondering where I am! I should hurry back!" In the end, I couldn't find any magical meat for her. I guess it was too much for me by myself... all I wanted was to make her feel better...

Letting out a big sigh, I noticed something splashing below me. It was too big to be a fish... I saw sparkling silver scales and a long body and tail.

"Oh, it's a sea serpent!" That's not a fish or a human, and it sure doesn't belong to anybody! Oh... but it lives in the sea, so... maybe it is a fish? No! It's a sea serpent! A monster! Not a fish!

"It's pretty big... I wonder if I can beat it on my own?" It might be bigger than me... no, no! I'm sure it isn't! Gah! It started hissing me! Hissing at me!

"I-I'm not scared of you!" I blew my fire breath at it. This way I don't have to get too close...

"Hey, no fair!" ...but it dove under the water. I can't use my fire, then! I'm going to have to grab it with my claws and bite it to death. To do that, I've got to get real close. It might attack me...

"...this is for Zero! I can do it for her! For her!" I've got to try! So Zero will get better! I'm going to feed her something magical! Taking a big breath, I swooped down toward the sea serpent.

"Take this!" I kicked at the sea serpent's head as hard as I could. Splashing up big waves, I grabbed its neck in my claws.

"Take this! And this! And some of that!" I ripped and I ripped and I ripped and I ripped at it!

"Wah! It's wrapping around me! It's wrapping around me!" I was so focused on tearing at its neck I didn't realize it was wrapping the bottom part of its body around me!

"That hurts! Let go! Noooo!" It was trying to pull me into the ocean with incredible strength. I twisted my body all around to shake it off.

"Why, you...!" I bit into its hard head, my fangs sinking their way in slowly but surely. Seawater got into my mouth and made me almost choke, but I didn't let go!

Zero! Zero! Wait for me! I'm going to bring you something really good to eat!

The sea serpent put up a tough fight, and by the time I'd finally beaten it the sun was almost set. When I got it back to the cave, it was already night. Zero was really mad that I left without saying anything to her, but she forgot to lose her temper when she saw the sea serpent.

"You killed that?"

"I did! So you can praise me... if you want! You can praise me a lot... if you want!"

Zero was staring at the sea serpent with wide eyes. Heh heh! Are you impressed? I beat something bigger than me!

"Let's hurry and eat it! You said if you ate lots of meat, you'd get better, right?"

I thought I heard the serpent growl, but it was probably just my imagination.

"Just to make sure... you did remember to land the finishing blow on this thing, didn't you?"

"The finishing what?"

"I figured. It's probably just playing possum... agh!"

Before Zero could finish speaking, the sea serpent started thrashing about.

"Whaaaat?! Why is it moving?! Why is it moving?!"

It was dead a minute ago! Dead as a doornail!

"Because it's still alive! You shitty dragon!"

The serpent squirmed out of my grasp! It was hissing at me again!

"It really is still alive!"

"Isn't that obvious?! Ugh!"

"I-I'm sorry~!"

I have to beat him again! And fast!

"Wah! He's strong! He's too strong!"

I can't believe the serpent is so lively even though we're on the surface now. He's wailing on me with his tail! Oh no! The cave is starting to collapse! Wah! He whacked me with his tail again! That stings!

"Goddamn it! I told you that lie to get you out of my hair, but look what happened!"

"What... you... you fibbed?!"

That is soooo mean! I worked so hard to find you magical meat! I went to the forest, the desert, the mountains... everywhere!

"Zero, you meanie! You... you fibster!"

"Shut up and fight!"

"I am! I am!"

"And stop saying things twice!"

Ow! Ow! Zero kicked me under the chin again! But... that must mean she's feeling better? Look at her go! Maybe the serpent really is magical?!

Even though I was getting kicked by Zero and smacked around by the sea serpent, I felt soooo relieved!

Michael's Novella – The Gone-Away

Translation by kho-dazat



As far back as I can remember, I have always found myself on the battlefield. For a really, really long time... that is, since time immemorial, I have fought. Awake or asleep, even in my dreams. How many countless years it has been... the exact number of foes I have vanquished... the very reasons I began to fight... time has obscured it all.

"Lowly insects! Die!"

A hint of my breath was all it took to set the many insects aflame. I watched as they crudely burned and turned to ashes. Weaklings whose strength lay only in their numbers, they could not hope to compare to a dragon such as myself. But burning them in large groups like this never failed to lift my spirits.

"Take this! And that! And some of that!"

By the time my flames had finished bathing the earth, not even one of the pests remained.
Truly a refreshing sensation!

"My name's... that is, I am known as Michael! Member of the mighty race of dra- Wah!"

A current of pain ran through one of my spread wings.

"Damn! So, there are puppets here too, eh?"

Perhaps in possession of slightly more intelligence than the average insect, the things I'd dubbed 'puppets' made use of projectile weaponry, which I caught sight of in the gathering swarm below. These guys always gave me trouble... err, what were those spiky things they'd shoot at me called again?

"Agh! Who cares?! Hateful peons! How dare the vermin that crawls upon the ground attempt to harm a member of the mighty race of dra- Wah! Wah! Wah!"

This time I felt several burning bolts graze my wings.

"Hey! Let me finish speaking, you- WAH!"

The puppets, who had flocked together in greater number than the insects from before, were preparing a giant weapon that took many of them just to move. What's this, now? Are they aiming it at me?

"...am I in what they call a pinch?"

Should I high-tail it? No... no! A proud dragon never turns his back on the enemy! But... to be honest, this wasn't looking too good...

"Fool! Do you not see the peril you are in?!"

I heard a voice bellow from beside me, snapping me back to my senses. I saw the great weapon had been enveloped in fire along with the bodies of the puppets who'd manned it.

"Your heedlessness astounds me!"

The one who had come to my rescue was another dragon, scales colored a deep red. Her tone was clearly that of exasperation. Meanwhile, I was feeling torn: should I be moved, having been saved by a compatriot? Or insulted, as a prideful dragon? I was leaning toward insulted.

"Why do you dawdle there with your mouth agape? Do you wish to die a dog's death?"

"B-be silent!"

We were of the same noble race, yet I found her attitude to be beyond haughty.

"Then make haste and retreat!"

"Y-you don't have to tell me!"

Frankly, it was beginning to piss me off!

"Rouse yourself, Michael!"

I awoke to the sound of her voice. To think that, of all things, I had been dreaming of my first encounter with this meddlesome red dragon...

"It takes great audacity, or great stupidity, to doze off in the midst of a battle!"

"B-be silent! I can handle small fry like these half-asleep!"

Since then, she and I had fought together on numerous occasions. To be more precise, it seemed she had taken it upon herself to look after me... not that I needed her help! Despite being an awful busybody for a dragon, and me having given her mine right off the bat, she had yet to tell me her name. To be fair, all the old-timer dragons had a tendency of being tight-lipped, and she had already made quite sure I knew she was my senior.

When I asked her directly about it, she'd told me it wasn't in a true dragon's nature to divulge his name. And what exactly is that supposed to mean? If withholding one's name, refusing to make conversation, and doing battle with all the enthusiasm of a dead fish is all in the nature of a 'true' dragon, you'll have to excuse me for being a fake!

The feeling of becoming stronger is pleasing; displaying that strength is valiant. Vanquishing enemies is exhilarating, getting injured by them is vexing, and seeing an ally hurt fills one with sorrow. Aren't these all-natural ways to feel? Does aging mean becoming stodgy and stale?

"Don't speak that way, Michael. Once you've lived long enough, you too will comprehend."

Red would always put an end to our talks this way. She acts high and mighty, but she's really only got a trifling two thousand years on me.

Red aside, though, it was Black who really rubbed me the wrong way. He was a black dragon about the same age as Red and as laconic as all old dragons. What set him apart was his absolutely brutal way of tearing through opponents. I'm attracted to strength, so I tried being friendly, but he just flat-out ignored me. Seriously, how annoying!

"Lost in thought again, are we? It's not bad to exercise your mind, but there's a time and a place for it."

"Be silent!"

Sure enough, it was not good to get distracted in battle. In fact, there was nothing more dangerous. Yet I didn't appreciate her pointing it out, so I tried to divert attention away from myself by changing the subject:

"Tell me, Red. When do you suppose this battle of ours will ever end?"

As I spoke, I realized I had actually been wanting to ask this exact question for a very long time. I've killed more than I could ever hope to count, piling up enough corpses to fill whole mountains. And yet it went on. The fighting never stopped or even slowed down. The enemy just kept coming and coming.

What were we fighting, anyway? Of course I knew who we were fighting; I didn't mean it in the sense I was unaware of the identity of our foes. What I meant was... ah, it's hard for me to put into words. How frustrating.

"Michael. None of us, not even the eldest, can remember when this battle began. So, we have no means of knowing when it may end..."

Red began to say, but her words got cut off, and my entire field of vision when white.

"...dreaming again, was I?"

How strange. I dreamt a dream within a dream. A dream of a distant battle, long past...

"What's wrong?"

I heard a voice from atop my back inquire. It was that of the human riding upon me. Humans were creatures that began to appear sometime after those battles had ended. Yes, that's right. The battles I had thought might continue eternally came all at once to an abrupt close. Perhaps that is not even the right way to phrase it; the conflict which had defined our existences as dragons up until that point had not merely ended, but been completely destroyed. What I had been dreaming of was the exact moment it had ceased to exist.

What made my vision go white was an explosion. What kind of magic it was, where it came from and why, I have little idea? Perhaps it was some power gone haywire; suffice it to say, the devastation it wrought was tremendous. It caused all trace of our countless enemies to vanish, and the very face of the earth to change. It even took out more than half of us dragons. The ones who did survive did so thanks only to the natural durability of our bodies protected by the hearty armor of our scales. The skies, once so crowded, felt impossibly wide. There had been enough of us to blot out the sun, but now it was rare to encounter another of our kind. Red and Black both survived, but I had seen neither in quite some time.

The surface of the earth became crowded instead. Soon it was teeming with creatures known as humans and their derivatives, subhumans. They reproduced at an astounding rate and came to far outnumber the insects and puppets I used to fight. But their lives were short and their bodies weak. What I'd consider a light blow was enough to make them stop moving. The one riding me now would also die before long, just as every other human I'd ever fought with had.

That's right. Despite their weakness, humans were almost constantly fighting. It's as if they delighted in shortening their already finite lifespans. I couldn't comprehend it. Perhaps it was out of a sense of curiosity, then, that I sometimes aided them in their battles on a whim.

"Michael."

The voice of the human on my back was trembling, if faintly. Was he frightened? Rather weak-willed, for a man.

"I'm sorry... I dragged you into all this."

"What do you take me for? I will not abide by you looking down upon me. Do you think you, a mere mortal, could hope to involve me in matters against my own will? I chose to fight with you. In the first place, human skirmishes mean little more to a dragon than do those of an ant's. You cannot know of the battlefields I have traversed in my long life, of the corpses I've left in my wake..."

I heard him apologize again. This is what irritated me about humans.

"We attack! Prepare yourself!"

I descended upon the fortress below me which, from my eyes, resembled a child's toy, and cast my fire breath down upon the soldiers who lined its walls...

"Another dream..."

That battle had left a bitter aftertaste. Is that why I had dreamt of it especially? But no... all the battles I'd shared with humans have been sour, perhaps because they all end up dying long before me.

That man was little different. Like the fool he was, he continued apologizing to his last breath. What need was there to ask my forgiveness? I always told him how much I couldn't stand things being repeated, too...

After laying his cold corpse upon a stone cliff I stood for a time beholding him, in something of a daze. I knew perfectly well how fragile humans were, how quick they were to die, and yet... I held the most scorn for myself, who always ended up feeling a sense of loss, regardless.

Unusually enough, and in a show of particularly bad timing, none other than Black passed by then. His eyes met mine for a moment before he continued his way, as brusque as ever. Within them I saw ridicule, but also a sense of pity, as if we were chiding me for letting humans into my heart. I didn't need to be told.

Whether they win or lose, all the awaits man is death. Even should they momentarily grasp at glory, it is for a blink of an eye. How meaningless, then, is human conflict. But is it really? Does what I've said apply only to human beings? What meaning was there in the battle we dragons waged? Looking back on those days, even the old timers I found so agitating seemed nostalgic. If not for our battle, how many more would still be alive, having grown all the crotchetier and more ill-humored with age?

> "Don't speak that way, Michael. Once you've lived long enough, you too will comprehend."

I remembered Red's words. Though she was only a little older than me, she had understood far better. To live long means to lose much... it means to be left behind, to be alone, to keep nothing. Perhaps the reason I continued aiding humans was that, somewhere in my heart, I wondered... no, hoped... they could give me something. Those creatures, so desperate to whittle down what little time afforded to them by taking up arms... maybe they knew something we long-lived dragons did not.

But it was all the same in the end. No matter how I fought, nothing remained. Nothing was gained.

> "Where is this? Is anyone there?"

I realized I was surrounded by a deep darkness. I felt neither the presence of the living or the dead within it. There was nothing.

> "Is no one... no one here?"

Hmph. I'm certain this is yet another dream I'll awaken soon enough from... most likely amid yet another battle. More battles? I've grown weary of fighting. Battles are no different from dreams. They all fade in the end... into nothing. Zero...

> "Ow ow ow!"

Something hit the bottom of my chin, where it's sensitive. This time I really, truly awoke.

> "Honestly. Do you ever toss and turn!"

I'd been kicked by the human I'd most recently become acquainted with. A woman who went by the name of Zero. She was crude and violent, ate like a hog and could never stop running her mouth. She did not fear me; in fact, she had a tendency to address me in quite inflammatory tones. And on top of everything, she was a terrible sleeper. Oh, how she punched and kicked... I didn't imagine it was normal even by human standards.

But all this piqued my interest, as well. She was very different from the humans I'd interacted with in the past. She would be; after all, she was out to kill all her sisters. I don't suppose there are many humans out there capable of doing that.

I knew my time with her would be short. She, too, would fade away, leaving me behind. In that respect alone she was exactly like the rest. But I didn't care. I'd decided to see her through her task and to the moment of her death. That was, after all, the promise we'd made. After this woman kills her sisters, I'd...

> "I will keep my word, no matter what happens. I swear it on my pride as a member of the mighty race of dra- ow! You kicked me again! How many times have I told you to let me finish speaking-"

I heard her snoring. She slept more deeply than any dragon I'd ever known. ...well, no matter.
At least she never failed to keep me amused.

One (brother)'s Novella – Mirror mirror

Translation by kho-dazat



I had to be here.
But I couldn't stay.
I had to come back here.
But I couldn't remain.
All for the sister who watched over me…
I had to be here.

My room is located in a tower in the cathedral. It's small, with only a few things in it: my bed, a little chair, the iron door, stone walls and a single window located so far up I can't see the sky from it. Yet it was my entire world.

Only my sister knew of me and my room. I've never spoken with anyone other than her and her dragon, Gabriella. And Gabriella mostly spoke only to Sister, not to me. She had a rough way of speaking and could be mean to me, but I didn't hate her, because Sister really seemed to love her.

Sometimes Sister would take me out on Gabriella's back and we'd fly through the sky together. We'd travel to battlefields. The world was still all messed up back then and Sister had lots of enemies to fight. I'd help her. I'm not sure how long we were fighting for, but it was also to help me get stronger. I had to be strong to defeat Zero. If Sister lost to Zero, then it was my job to kill her.

"Don't worry; you're my brother. You can do it."

Sister probably said that to reassure me, but she didn't realize I'd figured out something important. If I had to kill Zero, that'd mean Sister had already been killed by her. I didn't want that. I didn't want Sister to die. If Sister went away, who'd visit me? Who'd talk to me? If Sister went away, I…

The reason I was frowning wasn't that I was scared to fight. It was because I never wanted to have to use the sword made of dragon fang that Sister gave to me. I didn't want the day where I'd have to leave my room to ever come. I wanted Sister to keep visiting me there as she'd always done, holding me gently in her arms each time, forever and ever. That was my only wish. But…

But I couldn't stay.

Because the day did come. I knew it was the day my sister was going to fight Zero to death when she came to see me with a strained expression.

"It's okay. I'll do just as you taught me, Sister."

Sister looked surprised when I said this since she hadn't said anything herself yet. But I could understand her without the use of words. I'm not as smart as her, so I can't understand things that are too difficult, but I could always tell what she was feeling… whether she was happy or sad or mad… I could tell just by looking. I'm her twin, after all. Of course, I'd be able to. Of course, I'd know… that even if she beat Zero, I'd never see her again, because she was planning to die either way. I knew, so just that once, I tried to stop her. I threw a tantrum, sobbing and begging her not to go.

"It's all right. I won't lose."

Sister looked troubled. I hadn't meant to trouble her. I just wanted her to understand that I knew we wouldn't be seeing each other again, that this was our last meeting… I wanted her to know that I understood everything, and not to worry. Sister, I understood so much more than you realized…

Sister was killed by Zero, and I killed Zero just as I was instructed to. Now all the Intoners had been slain. But Sister, you didn't tell me what I should do after that. You didn't tell me what I should do or where I should go.

My head was so full with how you were going to die and how I had to kill Zero that I didn't think to ask. I regretted that now, but it was too late. Sister was dead so she couldn't tell me.

What caught my eye as I stood amongst their corpses was one of the stained-glass windows of the room we were in. It had been cracked, but it still shone beautifully in the light. It gave me an idea. I'd start a new religion in my sister's name. I'd re-create this church as a place of worship for her. I couldn't think of anything better than that. For my sister... I tried leaving, for her. But the world outside was too big, too scary, and without her, too lonely for me by myself. So, I ran back here, to my room, where I'd be safe. Where I didn't have to do anything at all.

I had to come back here.

No one knows about this room. As her trump card, Sister couldn't have anyone knowing about me. She probably didn't even tell her other sisters. She cast a spell on the door so it couldn't be seen from the outside, to make sure no one accidentally opened it. It wasn't locked, you see; Sister wasn't keeping me prisoner. But I never thought to leave on my own. I never wanted to. I'd only go out if Sister was taking me somewhere.

But she won't be taking me anywhere, anymore. So, the first thing I did when I came back was to make it so the door would never open again. I destroyed it from the inside so I'd never have to go back outside. There is nothing for me out there. I may have been able to help my sister, but I can't do anything on my own, aside from killing Zero. Reading the books she'd given me, practicing my sword work... that's how I used to pass the time in my room between Sister's visits. But she'll never come to visit me again. I'll never see her ever again.

No! I want to see her! I want to see my sister! I want to see her, I want to see her, I want to see her...!

Ah... that's it. I can't really see her again, but I can see her in a way. Since I was made from her, we look the same. We have the same face. So, if I put on some of her clothes and stand in front of the mirror, then...

Just as I thought! We're mirror images of each other. It's as if Sister is really standing before me.

"I wanted to see you, too." Said my sister from the mirror.

But even though she was right in front of me now... even though it seemed as if I could touch her... all my fingertips felt was the cold glass of the mirror. She's there, just beyond it. Why can't I step through myself? Why do I have to stay here, on the other side of the looking glass?

Why do I have to be all alone? Why did sister leave me behind? No... she hadn't meant to. I'll bet she meant to take me with her.

Sister had to kill Zero, and she had to die right after, since Intoners harbor the flower that will destroy the world if left to take seed in their bodies. Sister wanted to destroy the flower for good, but the flower will try to preserve itself. That's where Zero made a mistake. So that she wouldn't fail in the same way, Sister came up with a plan to make sure that regardless of who survived their battle, the flower would be wiped out. I was that plan. In this room, Sister would have me practice killing Zero. She drew the shape of a person on the wall and crossed an X over where the heart would be, so I wouldn't miss when the time came... so I'd be able to take Zero out with just one thrust. Soon a hole opened up in the wall where the X had been, so it was like I was actually stabbing through someone. I'd stab the hole over and over... swiftly, precisely... again and again, until Sister told me to stop.

But I wasn't training just to kill Zero, was I? I was practicing to kill you, too. If you'd survived... if the flower had somehow kept you alive... you'd stand behind the wall and have me stab straight through the hole like I always did. And you'd die. If I had to kill you myself, I couldn't keep on living. I'd have killed myself right after. Since I was made from you, the power of the flower isn't as strong in me and I'd probably die easily. And once I had, all traces of the flower would be eliminated from this world. That's right... Sister had never intended to leave me alone. She trusted that I'd follow after her. After all, I'd had the one weapon capable of killing Intoners. I'm not a true Intoner, but a normal sword couldn't kill me. I know, because I tried using one on myself as soon as I'd come back to my room. I'd forgotten the sword made of dragon fang back where I'd killed Zero. I'm so stupid. I went and destroyed the door, so I can't go back for it. I can't leave. I have to stay here, in this safe room. I made a mistake. Everything is my fault.

Sister, please scold me. Tell me what a bad brother I am. I am bad. So why won't you scold me? The Sister reflected in the mirror was silent, regarding me with sorrowful eyes, as if about to cry. I know that expression. I'd seen it before. It was the same face she made whenever she was in bed with me. I never understood why she

looked so pained while what we were doing made me feel so good. When I asked, she told me it was because it was wrong. That siblings shouldn't be doing what we were together. But that even knowing that, she couldn't stop herself. Her voice was so sad. I didn't understand. If it's wrong for siblings to do it together, then does that mean it's okay for strangers to? That seems much worse to me. When I told her that, she looked at a loss for words for a moment before making such a gentle expression it made my heart skip a beat.

"Yes... then it's all right, if it's with you..."

Sister, your face right now looks just like it did then.

"Really?"

Yes. You're even furrowing your eyebrows a bit. That's a habit of yours. Did you realize?

"No, I didn't."

I didn't think so. I didn't want to tell you.

"Why not?"

That's just the same, too! The way you tilt your head when asking me a question! I memorized all your expressions and tics... I wanted to keep them all to myself. I noticed things about you even you didn't. And not just on your face, either... the way your body moves, the tone of voice you'd use, even the way you'd breathe... I loved them all.

"I... I can't stand this...!"

Feeling agitated, I shook my head from side to side the way I would when throwing a tantrum. Heh heh... it looks cute when you do it, Sister. No one but me will ever see that. Now you belong just to me... Yes, that's the face...

So I can see you whenever I want. It's easy, since we're twins. I can't believe I didn't realize it sooner.

"I won't go anywhere."

That's right... you promised. I remember the night I woke up crying after having a nightmare... Sister, you were up. I guess you were probably trying to leave while I was still sleeping, but when you saw me upset you stayed with me until dawn, holding my hand and comforting me.

"I'm here with you."

Really? You won't go anywhere? You'll stay with me?

"Yes... always."

I don't have the weapon that could kill me anymore. I can't die, so neither can you. I didn't make a mistake after all. If I live, then so will you. And all I want is for you to live. I don't care if everyone else in the world has to die. Is that wrong? Does that make me bad?

"Of course not. You're a good little brother."

Sister, listen. I'm going to make a new religion, just for you. For you, and... and Gabriella, too. I remember how you loved her.

"Not just her. Gabriel, too. I loved her even after she reincarnated."

That's right. So, I'll create a church that will venerate all three of you.

"Tell me more."

Sure! See, thanks to Zero, the Capital got all messed up, right? But I'm going to build everything back up again, from scratch. Then I'll instate this new religion, and gather followers. Oh yeah, and I should come up with a symbol for it, one that represents us. How about this?

"This might work."

You think so, too? The image of Sister and I pressing our cheeks together, as if we've become one... as if we're reflecting one another.

"It almost looks like we only have three eyes between us."

You're right. Really, I want to become even more as one... I want the division between us to collapse, and for us to melt together... so that we'll never have to be parted again. I don't care if we can never go back to being separate. I want us to be One... Ah... but...

But I couldn't remain.

This room that no one knew about got discovered. Destroying the door broke Sister's spell and so it and the hole in the wall were found.

"Lady One! To think you were here all along...!"

Strangers broke down the wall and stood before me. I suppose they were the clergy of the church.

"We're so glad you're safe!"

Every one of them had tears in their eyes. So, I... I answered like this:

"I'm sorry to have worried you all. Everything is all right now. My wounds have all healed."

My sister (My brother) is always with me. We are One.

"Shall we go?"

Now she (he) and I will go outside. Together...

"I plan to build the church anew."

"Lady One?"

Now the two of us shall become the harbingers of a new faith.

"To honor the Watchers..."

I'm certain many will gather to venerate the Intoners and the Watchers they called forth.

All for the sister who watched over me...

Accord's Novella – Weapon Stories



Translation by kho-dazat

Busy, busy, busy! Really, I'm so busy. I feel like I could just fall over! It's not like I don't already have my hands full with my usual duties of stocking, repairing, and pricing merchandise. To have to refurbish my shop in time for its reopening on top of all that... even if I had a whole army of me, it wouldn't be enough!

Oh, hello there. My name is Accord, and I'm a weapon seller by trade. Hm? Who am I talking to? Now, now... let's not sweat the details.

In any case, today I have to inspect the weapons I have in stock, price them appropriately and put them out on display before I can be ready to open tomorrow. And if the weapon seller Accord isn't selling weapons, why... she'd just be a plain old Accord! Now, let's see... I'm searching for this weapon's weapon story. Here it is.

You see, weapons with colorful histories often come complete with a weapon story detailing how they were made and used until now. They can be quite interesting! For example, here's the one on this sword with the serrated edge:

> *This sword rends through both an opponent's weapon and flesh with its jagged blade.*
>
> *If you wield it for too long, your fingers will begin to go numb, and the more blood drawn with it, the whiter your body will become until you are left unable to move...*
>
> *Hundreds of years ago, a black-skinned knight used this sword to claim many victories.*
>
> *As time went on, his dark skin changed into a waxy white...*
>
> *Eventually the knight succeeded in taking the head of an enemy commander in a great battle for the honor of his country. But by then his body had become so light as to be transparent, and no one could see he was there...*

My, wasn't that scary? I wonder how true it is, though... a sword turning a person invisible doesn't sound very realistic... A-A-AHHHH! My arm! My arm! My left arm! It's vanishing together with the sword! I can't believe it, but apparently the story was 100% fact! This sword is cursed! I have to stop talking long enough to drop it!

...excuse me. I got a little flustered. Anyway, it seems this sword is a bit too dangerous to put on sale. If I could just figure out some way to break the curse on it... but that's sure to take time. It could take years, even. Well, I can be patient... it's not as if this is my only sword in stock.

Moving on... this weapon is strangely shaped, don't you think? A round ring with a handle. That's odd enough, but look! It's covered in spikes. How is one supposed to use this, exactly? Just walking around with it seems dangerous. Heaven help anyone near you if you just started swinging it around all willy-nilly! You'd end up hurting both your allies and yourself if you weren't careful. Well, I suppose if you're one of those types who doesn't mind a little pain... Let me take a look at its weapon story. Hm? Hmmm? Where'd I put it, now? Oh, found it.

> *Once upon a time, there were three children who always played together...*

Oh dear. Now that I look more closely, this weapon is covered in blood stains. As if it weren't foreboding enough already... Chilling, really. And doesn't blood rust the blade? I ought to try and get it off before selling it. I'll keep it in the back until then. I don't think a weapon this creepy would fit the mood of a store reopening very well, anyway... Okay, next...

If we're strictly speaking aesthetics, I think spears are the best-looking. Now, I'm not saying swords and gauntlets don't look nice either. It's just that spears are so stylish. It's the length that really makes them stand out. Take a look at this one here, for example. The craftsmanship is beautiful enough to make you swoon, isn't it? Its weapon story is pretty dramatic, too. Here's a sample:

A long time ago, there was a dragon who could not fly...

...that's how it starts. Doesn't the opening alone make you feel excited? Just holding a spear like this in your hands makes you want to start swinging it around. You know, with a big battle cry. Yah! Yeah, like that. Yah! YAH! ...AHHH!! Oh, what have I done?! I've gotten the spear stuck deep in the wall! I've got to pull it back out! What a pain...! Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. There's a crack in the head now. I've got to mend it... but that will take time, too, won't it? If it were the anywhere else that was damaged I could fix it myself, but when it comes to the artisan spearhead... I have no choice but to enlist the services of a proper blacksmith.

Honestly! Even though I'm already so busy, here I am, making holes in walls, damaging my own precious merchandise... I'm such a dunce! I'm going to go sit myself down in the corner for a while and reflect on my stupidity... While I'm here, I may as well inspect the rest of the weapons. Like this sword:

A blacksmith whose entire family had been slaughtered by a terrible ogre...

Stop reading! I thought this sounded familiar... it's a weapon story I penned myself! My fan weapon story! How embarrassing! No, no more of that. Also, this weapon appears to be under a seal. If broken, the ghost of a sorcerer will come tumbling out... awfully dangerous, that. I'd better apply an additional seal before putting it up for sale. I hope I can manage a decent one. Oh dear, this is going to take time, too, isn't it... What's next?

A commander longs to affirm his death...

Changing his feelings into the tears of heaven and earth...

His blood flows from darkness into light...

The teachings rob old life, yet also grant life anew...

Err... that didn't make a lick of sense, did it? What was the person who wrote this thinking? It may be a weapon story, but it's still a story, so it should be written to be at least semi-understandable, don't you agree? Also, the head of this spear is slightly bent. You wouldn't notice unless you looked very, very closely, but... even it's just a bit, damage is damage. I can't sell it like this. I'll send it out for repair along with the other spear.

Speaking of poorly written weapon stories, the one for this next sword takes the cake:

Iron Iron Iron Iron Iron Iron Iron...

Seriously, what is this? I'd like to see the face of the guy who wrote it. I'd have him sit in the corner a while himself. That aside, I don't think I can sell this weapon, either. I mean, it's broken... oh, but... it might be more attractive this way? It's very eye-catching; a real object d'art, if you know what I mean. Perhaps it'd be all right... no, no, damaged goods are damaged goods! But... on an aesthetic level... then it might be fine to... ah, I can't decide. I'll put it aside until I can come to a decision. This other one's rusted, so it's a no go. That leaves me with... um... huh?

In the end, the only weapon suitable for putting up for sale is this one sword that sort of resembles a cleaver. Ah... no matter how I try to look at it, a weapon seller with only one measly sword for sale is kind of a flop, huh?

Depending on your point of view, though... perhaps one sword really is enough. In the first place, weapons are expensive. Even if I struggle to put a bunch up for sale at once, it's not likely they'll all get bought together. It might be a better business, then, to have one especially well made, easy-to use-product available. Quality before quantity, as they say.

Also, weapons are tools. They're made to be used. As a weapon seller, even if my entire stock gets bought out, while I'd hardly say no to the gold, it would make me sad if most of them never got to see any action... in the end, I'd be most happy if this one sword got used to the fullest. That is how I honestly feel.

Okay! That's the plan, then. I'll have my customer unlock the maximum potential of this sword. And by the time she's finished doing that, the other weapons will be ready to buy... and there may be new ones, to boot! Now, to put this sword, 'The Roar of the Condemned', on display... its unusual name and appearance really give it some extra oomph! Now to rustle up a few healing items... and I'm all set.

Now, then. I must get going. Aside from getting the store ready, I have other various jobs to do. My work is never done! Although it may be a bit strange not to have the owner around on the opening day... it can't be helped. I'm sure it'll all be all right as long as I leave a note. Probably. Let's see... dear customer... this shop sells weapons and items, but due to the owner being otherwise occupied... okay, looks good. Let me go hang this on the door.

YOKO FACT 2 - Drakengard 3 - Philosophies of Violence

https://youtu.be/LD6xCLlF5dY

What is your name and role on Drakengard 3, and what were your most memorable moments during development?

My name is Taro Yoko, I'm the creative director for Drakengard 3. As for my responsibilities... I handle various odd jobs. There were plenty of memorable moments throughout the project, but I'd get in trouble if I talked about them. So I'm not going to go into any details. Sorry.

Drakengard 3 is often considered a dark fantasy with a twisted world. What inspired you?

People often ask me that. But actually I don't particularly see it as a dark world.
If one can venture to say I think inspiration comes from the real world.

What influenced your decision to work with so many female characters?

Honestly, I decided to work with female characters because all of the other proposals were scrapped and that was the only idea left. As for how feminine characteristics have influenced the game... I really don't know. I don't think the sex of the main character really affects the content or game design. It's probably not much different from a game with a male lead, in my opinion.

How has the style of the Drakengard series evolved over the last 10 years?

I think you're referring to the contents including the third installment when you say "series". I probably can't disclose information like the plot points of the third installment since this is a pre-release interview. All I can say at this point is "look forward to the release" and the usual PR line.

But I would like to share some personal thoughts, or sentiments I felt after having worked on the Drakengard franchise for 10 years. I have a feeling that this is going to be subtitled, so I'd like to talk about some things that I've never discussed with our Western audience before.

For starters, I've always felt that the possibilities of expression in games were expansive. As the hardware improves, it allows for more functions and a greater range of expression. At least that's what I thought would happen. But there's actually quite a bit of limitation. I've felt for a long time that there wasn't a whole lot of expression or presentation that was "acceptable". For a game that retails for 7800 Yen—I honestly have no idea what that'd be in US dollars, but let's say $60. So say you came up with an idea to create a $60 game that ends in three minutes. But that's just no going to happen. I don't know how to phrase it, but it's like there's this invisible wall that you can't breach.

Those three minutes could be the most beautiful three minutes ever made, but there are societal expectations or demands that prohibit you from making such a game. That's the reality. One of these restrictions or invisible walls is the demand to create games in which we kill things. That's the objective for a vast majority of games out on the market. If we're not killing, we're gaining an advantage over someone. What do we do in sports games? You defeat your opponent and strive to become the champs. There are so many examples of similar games and, actually, it appears that consumers prefer this mechanic. Moreover, as a person who makes games, I myself have always enjoyed standing above others, and I would wonder why that was.

It was about 10 years ago when we were working on the original Drakengard that I thought about the meaning of "killing". I was looking at a lot of games back then, and I saw these messages like "You've defeated 100 enemies!" or "Eradicated 100 enemy soldiers!" in an almost gloating manner. But when I thought about it in an extremely calm state of mind, it hit me that gloating about killing a hundred people is strange. I mean you're a serial killer if you killed a hundred people. It just struck me as insane. That's why I decided to have the army of the protagonist in Drakengard be one where everyone's insane, to create this twisted organization where everyone's wrong and unjust. I wanted to weave a tale about these twisted people.

And then we worked on NieR...We created this game called NieR, and after the world experienced the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq, we were being bombarded with updates of terrorist organizations and activities even in Japan. That's when my opinion changed. The vibe I was getting from society was: you don't have to be insane to kill someone. You just have to think you're right. So that's why I made NieR a game revolving around this concept of "being able to kill others if you think you're right," or "everyone believes that they're in the right". So these were games that made me think about what it means to kill, but that's really just how I personally felt. I don't think it really affects the players. The discussion about what type of game a title is really falls to the players who've gone out and actually played the game. I truly believe that games are a medium that allows the player to find their own answers to these questions. The thoughts and beliefs of the game creators are separate and often quite vague.

Which brings us to the third installment... I still didn't have any answers after making the first two, and I had no idea what to do. And since I can't divulge any information about the story or game world, I'll just say that I decided to do a complete about-face and depict an answer from left field, if you will. That was my goal, but I couldn't find any answers for myself. You could say that the third game left me with unanswered questions, at least internally. So Drakengard 3 has been released in Japan, but I think that these types of killing games will continue to permeate the industry...

Deprivation due to terrorism and inequalities still exist. We still see a multitude of competition be it corporate competition or getting a better grade than a friend in school. The world is which we try to stand above everyone else has remained the same during the last 10 years I've made games. This whole time, I have been thinking about these games in which we kill. And looking at the world, the gaming industry, and my own work after making the third installment in the Drakengard series, I have to say that there has been no revolution or great change. I perceive that as a failure. At least for me, it's a personal failure. But...I say "But", because I remain convinced of the tremendous potential in games. And with the assumption that this interview will be subtitled—right around here, I presume—there is something I want to get across to people in game development worldwide. I think the hidden barriers are many and various visually and functionally.

Especially regarding the limitations in having to kill in our games, perhaps the solutions to breaking though such limitations may not be found in a place like Japan where it is relatively peaceful, but in countries that are more directly impacted by terrorism and war. What I would really like to see is for game developers to not take these limitations as a given, to bring about some real change to the world.

Anyway, I usually don't like interviews, but as long as I'm doing this, I thought I would take this opportunity to say something of some substance. So that just about wraps up what I wanted to talk about today. These are my thoughts after finishing Drakengard 3. The end.

CHAPTER 2

Drakengard

Humanity at its lowest.



Between both Games: from 1000 to 1099

After having killed Zero, Brother One has lost his only purpose in life, along with the people he knew. Without any guidance, he starts to panic and rushes inside his room. According to his sister's plan, he should have killed himself with his draconic weapon. That was his ultimate task, but it's too late now. In conclusion: the flower is still living through him and thus, Zero's struggle has been in vain. One is gone forever, but he wishes to see her once again. At this moment, he sees himself in a nearby mirror: there, wearing the same clothes, having the same face and body, he could almost touch her again. Beyond this cold wall, his sister is still alive. His reflection, her, himself, everything gets mixed up. In some twisted ways, her sister is still alive. Through him, he can impersonate One and make her exist again. Soon, some guards of Cathedral City find him. Using One identity, he creates the Cult of the Watchers, a new religion in honor of his sister and the Watcher Gabriel. Build upon the remains of the Pythagoras Institute Church, its symbol represents the twins sharing one central eye.

In the following decade, Midgard will experience a period of numerous transformations. Following the death of the Intoners, even fiercer monsters crop up across the continent, bringing terror and poverty within the population. The intellectuals gathered within the Cult, discover the "Seeds of Destruction", God's playthings to eradicate mankind. It is believed that anything entering the Seeds will turn into a creature hellbent on destroying humanity. In order to protect the world from chaos, the Cult design "the Seal System".

Established in 1012, this mechanism works using four seals scattered throughout the continent: the Seal of the Desert, the Seal of the Forest, and the Seal of the Ocean. The last Seal is embodied by the Goddess of the Seal. The Goddess, who must always be a female, is chosen by the "mark" that spontaneously appears on her body. Once the Goddess is found by the priests, a sealing ritual is performed upon her, tying the weight of Time, Space and Dimension to her existence. However, this great protection comes with an excruciating price: she may never marry or give birth. Even worse is the continuous pain afflicted by the Seal. The burden is so great that most Goddesses attempt suicide.

In 1017, the second Goddess of the Seal is chosen. She was the former aid of the leader of the Cult, which made her a controversial goddess. Soon after her appointment, a civil war breaks out within the hierarchs and One is exiled. In the following months, an unknown illness manifests within someone related to the Cult. It is characterized by scarlet red eyes in the victim, hence its name: "The Red Eye Disease". The man quickly became uncontrollable and violent, as if possessed by an evil spirit. Unable to handle both the disease and the monsters, the Cult's territorial base crumbles. The consequences are tremendous. The population is stricken by chronic famine, and turf wars break out wherever the Cult is missing. In this geopolitical context, small independent provinces emerge such as Caerleon.

In order to secure its boundaries, the Cult must narrow is own territory. Despite this loss, worshippers continue to flock toward the Iberian Peninsula, replenishing its ranks. The Empire is born. In response, several hundred provinces form a coalition called "the Union". While the Union has the numerical advantage, the Empire's infantry is "magically enhanced" by the Red Eye Disease, making them strong and merciless. Furthermore, the Empire often enlists the help of various monsters such as goblins, ogres, and other strange beasts.

No one knows the disease's roots. It is thought to have originated from One, or more precisely, the Flower still in him. During his exile, he met Rosa, a refugee from the former Land of Forest. In 1025, she gave birth to his twin children, Gruen and Grant. Despite One's expulsion, his offsprings have managed to join the Cult high command.

Check out One's progeny in Appendix 2 at the end of the book.

The story continues with her great-great-granddaughter, Manah. In 1099, she is left alone by her own mother in the middle of nowhere. In this moment of extreme weakness, the Watchers promise to love her as she always wanted. All she has to do is to give up her heart and soul...to be completely controlled by them. Almost a century after Zero's struggle, her cursed blood still flows in Manah's veins, which means that the Watchers have retained a gate to this world. Shocked and incapable to think properly, Manah is unable to resist the Watchers. In the

following months, she is found by the Empire and become the high priestess of the Cult of the Watchers. Under Manah's command, the Cult's mission changes dramatically: rather than perpetuating the tradition and protect the Seals, they plan to destroy them. The religious precepts are rewritten, and removing the Seals is now the only way to save the world from ruin. Carry to completion, this process should release the "Seed of Resurrection", an existence that will save humanity.

The Seals and the Goddess been located in the Union, the Empire launches a large offensive. They quickly take over large portions of the Union's territory, and soon, an army of Red Eye soldiers gathers near the Castle sheltering Furiae, the thirteen Goddess of the Seal. Carried by brotherly love and blood lust, Caim joins the battlefield.

Let's learn about the backstory of those characters in the following novellas.

YOKO FACT 3 – Interview with Nobuyoshi Sano for vgmonline.net

http://www.vgmonline.net/nobuyoshisanointerview/



Nobuyoshi Sano (aka sanodg) is Drakengard's music director.
He also worked on titles like Tekken or Ridge Racer.

Moving to your post-Namco works, Drakengard seemed to have a Rite of Spring-like reaction: while it initially caused repulsion, it is now widely appreciated by both Japanese and Western audiences. What do you think about this turnaround, as evidenced by the reprint of the soundtrack? Did the initial reaction provoke you to take a completely different direction for the sequel?

The game was released right around the time that 2chan (Japan's famous anonymous internet message board) was beginning to take off in popularity, and every day I would see a huge volume of virulently negative comments on the music. Of course, I had never assumed that this kind of music would have widespread acceptance, but I was shocked by how much the mounting criticism exceeded anything I had anticipated.

So, I think I was more skeptical than anyone else when the soundtrack was rereleased ten years later. Although I had met a good number of people who told me "I was a fan of Drakengard's music", and part of me was happy, it was an odd feeling because it brought back all of the bad memories of ten years earlier in vivid detail. That said, it certainly has held up quite well. But I didn't end up participating in the music for the Drakengard sequels.

I've got to say that "Rite of Spring-like reaction" is a great expression! I think I'm going to have to use it myself.

The Song of a Fourteen Years Old

Translation by kho-dazat

You are the light. The light that illuminates my world.
A capricious wavering prism.

— From "Promises & Light"

Inuart brought his sword down from overhead with every last ounce of his might, but Caim deflected it easily. They were childhood friends only four years apart, Caim being on the cusp of eighteen and Inuart having just turned fourteen, yet the gulf between them enormous and could be seen clearly in the differences between their heights, builds and most of all, strength. This, along with Caim's uncanny skill with the sword, made it impossible for Inuart to ever best him. His breathing ragged, Inuart spied Furiae out of the corner of his eye. Caim's younger sister, she was observing their match from where she stood a little deeper into the garden.

I'm going to lose to Caim in front of Furiae again...!

Soaked with sweat beneath his chain mail, the voice of Inuart's father rang in his ears:

"Rejoice, my son! His Majesty wishes you and Princess Furiae to be wed!"

This was the news Inuart's father, Ipris, had stopped to tell him as he was on his way to meet Caim that morning. Ipris had long enjoyed a relationship with King Gaap that was far more intimate than that between a monarch and his vassal. You might have called them best friends. Thanks to that, Inuart had the privilege of growing up alongside Caim and Furiae as if they were family. But even so, for the eighth in the line of the great kings of Caerleon to express so plainly his desire for Ipris' son to marry his daughter... there could be no greater honor. It was no wonder Ipris' face was positively beaming.

But Father... what if Furiae doesn't want to be wed to a weakling like me?

Inuart's doubts clouded his focus and created a great many openings in his training session with Caim. The prince's sharp eyes did not let the trembling of his opponent's sword go unnoticed, and in a moment Caim's sword was at Inuart's throat. Surprised, Inuart's gauntleted hands shot up and knocked again Caim's hilt. While the impact was light, it was enough to cause Inuart to drop his weapon completely. He watched in a daze as the broadsword he had begged his father to buy him pierced the ground.

I am weak.

"Are you unhurt?" Caim asked concernedly. Inuart ignored both him and the equally concerned Furiae who had come rushing over to check on them. Pulling his sword out of the earth, he hurried out of the garden, as if to escape. The only thing he was grateful for was that King Gaap, who had been the one to teach the sword to both he and Caim, was away touring neighboring countries and not been there to witness what had happened.

Returning to his family's mansion, Inuart wished to be alone in his room and so dismissed all the servants nearby. After he had made sure their footsteps were far enough away, he began removing his clothes. Fully naked, he felt the gentle wind blowing in from the stone window on his bare skin. The faint rays of sunlight softened the shadows, and while listening to the chirping of the birds in the tree outside, Inuart began to scrutinize his whole body, from the top of his head to the tips of his toes.

My hair... I hate how curly and red it is.

Inuart clicked his tongue at the thought of Caim's black hair which, no matter how much of a sweat he'd build up during training, soon went back to being silky and straight.

And my skin... why have I been so slow in growing body and facial hair?

Wanting to at least become a little less pale, Inuart had tried sunbathing in the garden as Caim often did. All he'd ended up with was a bad sunburn, and once the skin had come peeling off, he saw that underneath he was as white as ever.

My arms and legs... they're so stupidly skinny. Why can't I build more muscle? I swing my sword a thousand times every morning just as Caim does, and yet my chest is not a fraction as broad...

Imagining Caim's body, slim but perfectly sculpted, Inuart felt pangs of jealousy.

And why am I not getting any taller? At this rate, forget about catching up to Caim...
I'm in danger of being outgrown by Furiae!

Inuart hated his body which bore little difference to that of the girl one year his junior.

Aren't I a man? I'm supposed to be a man! I want to be a man...

Caim and Furiae had both comforted him, saying he'd become an adult by the end of the summer, but he took their words as meaning they still considered him a child now.

At least my voice finally changed...

Inuart thought as he gingerly stroked his throat.

I want to hurry and become an adult... a man. A man worthy of Furiae.

Inuart cast his eyes down toward his nether regions. Of all the things that troubled him about his body, foremost among them was the fact that the appendage that signified him most as a man was still that of a boy's.

"You child!"

He spat at himself before putting his clothes back on.

All dressed, Inuart approached his desk, removing a small glass bottle full of amber liquid from one of its drawers. He held the bottle up to the light, carefully inspecting its contents before removing the cork and taking a sniff. Steeling himself, he downed it all in one go. Once he had, though, he began to cough furiously. Frantically he reached for the silver water pitcher as he continued to hack. Grasping the handle, he drank straight from the spout, water pouring all down his face and neck.

"By Gods, that was bitter!"

Inuart twisted his mouth, tears running down his eyes and snot pouring from his nose.

"But with this..."

Chuckling, Inuart took out a sheet of sturdy parchment paper and placed in on the surface of his desk. Preparing ink and a quill, he focused intently on the blank page. After giving his face a rough rub, he hunched over and began writing breathlessly. The ink splashed on his clothing and face, but this did not slow his hand.

I want to become a man worthy of being at your side.
I am a lost puppy, nipping at your heels.
Show me the way home with your kiss.

— From "Labyrinth of Dreams"

That evening, at the stroke of midnight, Inuart awoke to feelings of intense nausea. As soon as he'd sat up, he vomited that night's dinner all over his bed.

"Someone... help..."

He called out in a strained voice. His vision was blurry, his trembling fingertips as cold as ice, and chills raced up and down his spine. Even after he had vacated the entirety of what was in his stomach, he continued retching yellowish bile.

The servant who first found him in this state feared he may have been poisoned, which caused enough of a panic that soon Inuart's father had appeared on the scene. Ignoring the acrid smell of vomit, he approached his son

who lay crouched on all fours, immobile. Gently lowering him down to the ground, Ipris ordered the servants to change the bedsheets.

> "What happened? Did you eat something off the floor?"

> "I'm not a dog...!"

Inuart protested weakly, burying his aching head in the knees he had gathered to his chest. Looking at the concerned and sleepy-looking faces of his servants, the family doctor, and his father were worsening his sense of vertigo.

> "I... I drank some medicine."

As soon as he said this, a sharp-eyed servant discovered the small bottle in his desk which still had some amber liquid left in it. The doctor took it from him.

> "Master Inuart, what manner of medicine is this? I don't remember prescribing you any."

> "It's... growth medicine."

> "Growth medicine?"

> "Yes. It's supposed to promote growth! It comes from the far east... I bought it from Jan's shop."

> "Did you say Jan? You can't trust anything you buy from that charlatan!"

The doctor chided Inuart as if he were simple. He then began to read the label of the bottle aloud:

> "Effects: Increased height, hair growth... lengthening of the male member...? Warnings: For use by men only... women are not to ingest... Ingredients:... ah, now I see. It's no wonder you got sick. This is no medicine, Master Inuart. I'm afraid Jan pulled one over on you."

Sounds of laughter and scorn were mixed in the murmuring of the servants. Inuart's face flushed red. Remembering how he had donned a fake beard and big hat to sneak out to Jan's shop, he thought himself a sorry fool. In the end he was still a child, one who knew nothing of the world. Seeing his son's shoulders slump, Ipris ordered everyone to leave. After thanking them for their help, he had the sense of press a few coins into their hands to ensure their silence.

Returning to the room, Ipris folded his arms and firmed his expression.

> "Inuart. It is true that for a lad of fourteen, you are on the small side. But puberty has only just begun for you. Even Lord Caim, at fifteen, still looked very much a child. There is no need for you to be so harried."

Inuart was expecting to be scolded for embarrassing both himself and his father, so was taken off-guard by Ipris' gentle words. All the more so when the man kneeled down beside him and placed a hand on his back.

> "Are you feeling better? You have a bit of a fever. Take a break from sword training tomorrow... well, I should say today, as it's past midnight. I'll inform Lord Caim that you're feeling under the weather."

> "Take a break...?"

He began shaking his head frantically.

> "No! I can't! If I miss a single day, Caim will be that much further ahead of me! The distance between us is already so large! I couldn't bear to give him more of an advantage! I couldn't bear it!"

Ipris watched, exasperated, as his son through a tantrum. Suddenly, though, he got an idea.

> "Wait here."

He said before ducking out of the room. Soon he had returned with an unfamiliar instrument in tow. Before Inuart could ask what they were, Ipris was pressing it into his hands.

> "This is a harp. In my youth, I used it to win your mother's hand."

> "You got mother to marry you by playing music?!"

Inuart exclaimed. He could hardly believe it, but Ipris nodded.

"Listen well, Inuart. It is not the sword that captures a woman's heart. Nay, it is song."

Ipris gave one of the strings of the harp Inuart held a pluck with his finger. A sweet sound filled the air, and Inuart's eyes widened as the delicateness of it. Soon he was running his fingers over the strings himself.

"Amazing! Listen to how the notes follow after each other, as if in a chase. Truly amazing!"

Seeing the sparkle in his son's eyes, Ipris smiled, satisfied.

"Inuart, have confidence in yourself. I believe you have been blessed by the god of music."

"What do you mean...?"

"Your voice can give wings to those notes, and if you add your poetry to them, they may reach deep into the hearts of those who listen. What I mean to say is, you may well have a natural gift."

"M-my poetry...? Father, you read them? Without even asking?"

Inuart's face was alternately turning blue and red, but Ipris only responded by handing him a book of instructions on how to play.

"Take today off to rest and become better acquainted with your harp."

"But...no matter how good I get at playing this harp, it won't help my sword work.
It won't help me beat Caim..."

Ipris, who had been making to leave, stopped at the door. He turned his eyes on Inuart and his gaze was impassive, containing neither kindness nor anger.

"Do not fight battles you cannot win."

"W-what...?"

"Lord Caim wields his sword not for himself, but for his country. But at the moment, you brandish yours only for yourself. No matter how violently you swing such a selfish sword, it can never hope to defeat one that was drawn in the name of peace."

"I don't... I don't understand!"

Ipris gave his stammering son a magnanimous smile.

"I pray you never truly will. But commit my words to memory all the same, for they are true. Take it from your father, whose blade once thirsted only for blood..."

Even Inuart could plainly tell the truth and conviction behind Ipris' words were real. Yet he also felt that conviction was something his father had gained by virtue of being further along in life, of being in possession of many more experiences... and no longer in danger of having to feel the pains of adolescence ever again. As such, through his fourteen-year-old ears, they came off as being cavalier, and he found himself repulsed by them.

Father, how do you expect me to understand any of that? I don't want to!

After his father had left, Inuart dug his nails so hard into the skin of his balled fists, they drew blood. His heart seemed ready to burst, it was so full of emotions he could not express and dared not inspect too closely.

It hurts... it hurts! How can I stop this pain? Should I scream? Break something? Swing my sword? No...

It did not take long for it to occur to Inuart that he could express his anger through song.

"I despise adults! Yet I long to become one!
In my hypocrisy alone do I resemble one.
Down with grown-ups!"

— From "How Long Will My Torture (Puberty) Go On?"

Before Inuart had realized, the sun was high in the sky. Yet he was far too absorbed in playing to feel tired or hungry. At first, he sang only to quell his raging heart, but the more he did sing the more the tension left his body. Inuart had already become able to play the harp adequately with just a flip through the instructional book. Soon he had completely memorized which strings made what sounds, and what sort of strokes produced the nicest sounds. It all came to him with an astounding naturalness. It was an experience entirely different compared to how he struggled to learn the sword, strategy and how to ride a horse. Despite the huge amount of effort he put into those things, in terms of natural ability, he always found himself below Caim and this had left him quite bitter. Yet it was the opposite with song. For the first time in his life, Inuart felt a sense of superiority and pride which greatly excited him.

This is fun! Singing is fun! I feel so alive!

Suddenly, the sound of soft clapping echoed throughout the room. Inuart stopped playing and turned to see the silent spectator who had been listening in on his performance for some time. In her hands, she held a bouquet of fresh flowers, the scent of which tickled his nostrils.

"Furiae?!"

"I'm sorry if I surprised you. I came to visit since I'd heard you were sick."

Furiae lowered her eyes shyly, sinking her face into the bouquet. Her glossy brown hair, so similar to Caim's, cascaded down her face and neck.

"You came by yourself?"

"Yes. Brother had his sovereign studies to attend to, so..."

Inuart often forgot it, but in truth, the burden on Caim's shoulders as a prince was extremely heavy. Due to King Gaap's generous nature, the three children had grown up like siblings, but in truth both Caim and Furiae were of much greater station.

"How long were you standing there? Did you... hear me singing?"

Inuart scratched his head awkwardly, cheeks red. Furiae gave a nod, her face blushing too.

"I did. They were beautiful... really."

While Furiae's praise was heartfelt, it pained Inuart to hear it. Among the songs he'd been singing, there had been those overflowing with raw desire for the innocent girl. To think they had reached her ears made him want to disappear on the spot.

"Please... my songs, they are... dirty. Not fit to be heard..."

After hearing his words, Furiae tilted her head slightly, as if in thought. Then she smiled a smile utterly unlike any Inuart had seen on her face before. It was that of an adult, and dangerously bewitching.

"I don't mind. I am rather dirtied, myself..." She whispered.

Time froze. Inuart's eyes were fixed on Furiae's. Likewise, hers were set on Inuart's. He saw in their reflection the sight of his own face, which looked worn due to lack of sleep. He also realized for the first time that he was still in his night clothes. Suddenly he became much more preoccupied with his appearance than with Furiae's enigmatic words.

Watching as he began to straighten his clothes self-consciously, the raw expression on Furiae's face which had exposed the woman growing with her was painted over by her usual lovely smile. At the same time, the sudden intimacy that had sparked between them became less intense.

Furiae handed Inuart the bouquet of flowers she had likely picked from the garden herself.

"I enjoyed your songs. If you wouldn't mind, I'd love to hear them again..." She said in a voice just barely audible. Inuart dared to look back into Furiae's eyes and saw they were still reflecting him. They did not shine the same way as when she beheld her brother, but it was clear that she was regarding him differently than she had just moments before.

Could it be that, in Furiae's heart... I have become a man?

Gripping his harp, Inuart gave her a smile.

"Of course I don't mind. I will play for you... I will sing for your sake.
Whenever you want, and for as long as you desire..."

The next day, Inuart was again facing off against Caim in the garden. While still nimbly parrying his blows, Caim remarked:

"You're becoming more skilled!"

"Truly? But I'm still no match for you!"

Panting, Inuart managed to ward off Caim's blade. On the sidelines were King Gaap, having returned from his tour, and Furiae, who was cheering him on while holding his harp.

That won't always be true, though, Caim. Soon, I'll grow taller.
I'll put on lots of muscle, too. It won't happen right away, I know. But soon...

Caim's left flank was open. This was the first time Inuart had ever perceived any openings in Caim's stance since they had started sparring.

"Yaaah!"



Still, even as he aimed for it, Caim's reflexes won out in the end. His sword got batted back, and the strength of the blow sent Inuart flying backward. He landed on his back, upon the grass. As he raised his head, he saw Furiae was running to his side. King Gaap had risen from his seat, and Caim was looking in his direction concernedly as he wiped the sweat from his brow.

"I'm all right!" Inuart called out, his voice echoing throughout the wide blue sky. He then quickly jumped back to his feet.

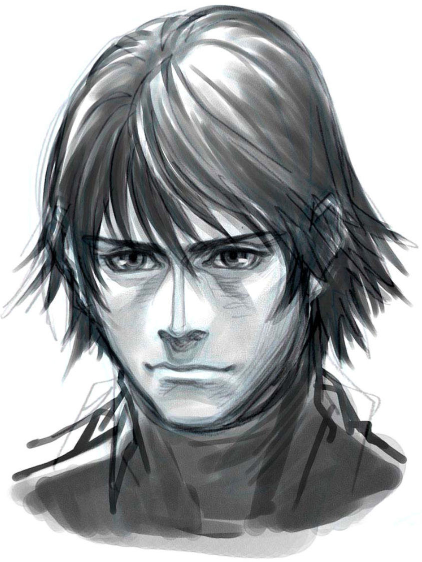
"I can go for another round!" Taking his sword back in hand, Inuart stared Caim down.

Caim... one day, I'm sure to become stronger than you!

With a battle cry, Inuart rushed toward Caim. His broadsword, too large for his frame, caught the sunlight and shone brightly.

" I won't give up on what I believe in. That's my motto.
I swear on the precious memories I share with you...
...that one day, I will know victory!

— From "In Praise of the Future"



Caim's Novella *Translation by Kestrel*

Burning in the flames of revenge, he becomes a demon of battle...

When did the gears first deviate from their course......?

It was not something Caim could ask himself. Surrounded by his strict yet caring father, his kind mother and his sweet and lovely younger sister, he led a happy life in those days. His childhood friend and sword fighting rival, Inuart, eventually became his brother-in-law. Someday he would succeed his father in governance of the kingdom of Caerleon, and he'd appoint Inuart onto his staff—he held dreams such as this.

However, for the Caim of today, there is nothing.

In retrospect, the incident that occurred the day before that terrible tragedy could very well have been an omen. During their usual sword practice, Inuart accidentally managed to injure Caim. Fortunately, it was a shallow wound and Caim laughed it off as his friend's enthusiasm for their training.

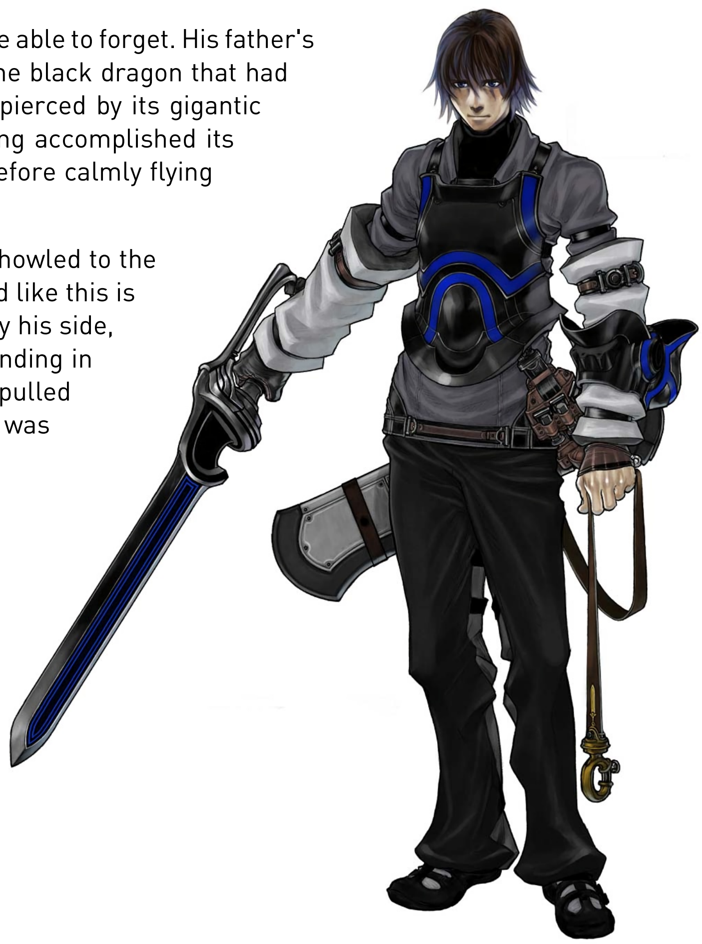
However, Furiae did not. She scolded Inuart with a surprisingly threatening attitude and the defeated Inuart, with an unpleasant look on his face, took his leave of the place. Although glad, Furiae's brother was inwardly troubled. "Well, maybe I should talk with her about it later" So thinking, Caim led his younger sister—who was so worried it seemed she would burst into tears any moment—back into the castle. However, the complex look he'd seen in Inuart's eyes as he left, was something that the Caim of this moment had no reason to understand.

And the next day, the tragedy occurred.

That spectacle was something he would probably never be able to forget. His father's body being slowly crunched between the ugly teeth of the black dragon that had suddenly attacked the castle, his mother's body easily pierced by its gigantic claws. All of this happened in the blink of an eye. Having accomplished its goal, the black dragon glanced at Caim and his sister before calmly flying away from that place.

Caim howled. And he continued to raise his voice as he howled to the point his lungs would surely give out. How long he stayed like this is unknown. Suddenly coming back to himself, Caim saw by his side, overwhelmed with surprise and despair, Furiae was standing in a daze, having forgotten how to scream or to cry. Caim pulled her into an embrace. He noticed then that Furiae was trembling all over, and hugged her even tighter.

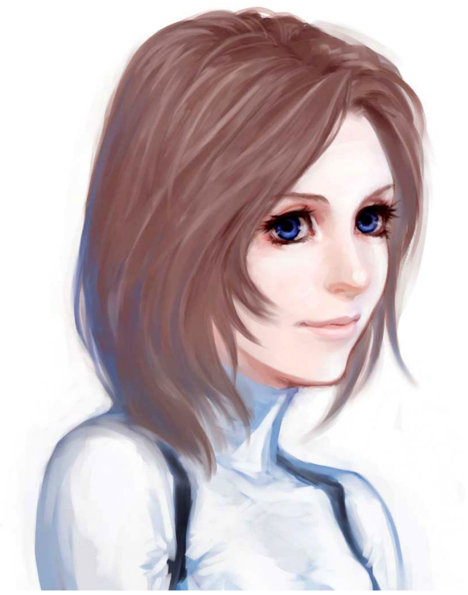
Six years have passed since then. Family, friends, and home, no longer exist. Caim has nothing now but daily combat. With unaffected determination, he kills his opponents. The thrill of battle helps him forget reality. Now, "revenge" has for Caim become an excuse with which to kill his opponents. Anger flows through his body. And always, his heart is empty as the void.



Furiae's Novella

Translation by Kestrel

Having severed relations with earthly life, the goddess lives in suffering...



The goddess's daily life is filled with tedium.

Mornings, she wakes up in the ever-gloomy house, and together with Verdelet lifts up prayers to God. As day breaks, she finishes a frugal meal, after which there is nothing particular for her to do. When she'd just become the goddess, scriptures and theology books and the like were placed in her room, and she'd looked through them out of idle curiosity. However, as the contents of each and every one of them was nothing but stiff and formal text, she quickly lost interest. The furnishings were extremely modest, the stiffness of the bed surprising her more than anything. The room was equipped with all the necessities of daily life, but there was not one object that could possibly be considered good for amusement. As a princess who had been raised in an environment devoid of discomfort, life as the goddess was akin to torture. "But the fact of the matter is that I chose this life myself". So Furiae bit back her complaints.

She didn't want to remember it ever again—and yet, even now when she closed her eyes the scene of that tragic day would rise unbidden to her mind, the scene that had changed everything. Her kind and cheerful brother had become someone who brooded most of the day, and rarely ever smiled. She sometimes heard screams coming from his room in the dead of night. The next day, if asked about it, Caim would answer only with "I had a bad dream." Furiae could not give her aid to such a brother.

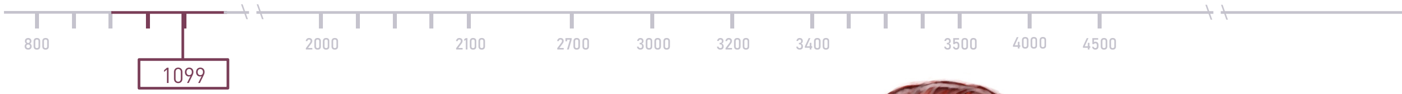


Inuart, Furiae's fiancee, worried over them as well, and came to visit countless times. However, even the sound of his harp-playing could no longer move her heart to the degree that it once had. Before she knew it, she too had begun to close the doors of her heart, just like her brother Caim.

A year after the tragedy, the siblings were separated from their country. Inuart had invited her to go with him, but Furiae was worried, having seeing Caim's condition up-close, and could not afford to leave him alone. However, that may have been an excuse of her own making. Her true feelings spoke thus, though she was not entirely aware of it herself. "I don't want to be separated from Brother!"

However, immediately upon starting their journey away from the country, something unusual arose within Furiae's body. Pain wracked the girl's body, and the "mark" of the goddess appeared. Becoming the goddess meant isolation from the world. If this were to happen, she would never be able to meet her brother or Inuart again. For Furiae, this was a fate too cruel to bear. "Why must I be the only one caught in such a..."

Several days after the "mark" had appeared, Furiae decided to become the goddess. She told her brother this in her usual peaceful tone, with her mouth even shaped into a smile. However, those eyes were terrifyingly empty. That was only natural. At the age of only 14, the girl was forced to give up everything.



Inuart's Novella

Translation by Kestrel

Single-minded desire begins to devour him unaware...



In the moonlight shining through the window of his room, a solitary young man was lost in thought. The young man, with his lean and well-trained body, good looks and longish red hair, was a great man who could certainly arrest the eyes of all the women he passed by in town. However, contrary to his awe-inspiring, manly appearance, his thoughts were sunk into a dark depression.

He wanted to go back to that time. Caim treated him with affection, without an atom of regard for the difference in social statuses. And Furiae was always beside the two, smiling softly at the two. Hampered by the weight of his furiously beating heart, he stumbled over his words countless times in an attempt to confess his love, and when Furiae responded with a blush, he felt as if he had risen to heaven. Everything shone, in those days.

However, something began to change after that horrific tragedy. With Caim having closed off his heart after his parents were killed before his eyes, Furiae worried over her brother, to the point that whenever she and Inuart were together her mind was in another place entirely... Inuart, in order to be helpful to them where he could, helped his father Ipris with his administrative duties. Despite this, a year after Gaap's death, Ipris died of illness. The three people he had left behind in adversity thus decided to leave the country.

The grief at the loss of his father was great, but within Inuart's heart was the secretively joyful thought "This way I can finally be together with Furiae". But his expectations failed when the hard reality was thrust before him. Rather than being Inuart's fiancee, Furiae chose to stay with her brother Caim. While he accepted this with apparent calmness, Inuart was inwardly shaken and discouraged to an immeasurable degree. "Why must she choose Caim over me!" Inuart's heart was filled with whirling jealousy, and as he cursed himself for his inability to support them, he sat alone in the now-empty palace, playing his harp. Having lost Furiae whom he'd loved, the man had nothing left to his name but his songs. And, immediately afterward, when the "mark" appeared on Furiae, his fiancee went somewhere his hands could never reach. Inuart's dreams of a brilliant future had been lost for all eternity.



Several years after that. In this disturbed age, Inuart spent his days fighting as a member of the Union Army. The sword skills he'd once forged together with Caim now served more useful than ever in this environment. However, his heart was constantly troubled by his thoughts. "If I had even more power, then Furiae would... I wish for power!"

A dog's howl could be heard from somewhere, snapping the young man out of his thoughts. Inuart slowly raised his body from the bed, taking his harp from where it lay against the wall, and quietly began to play. That melancholy tune did not cease until dawn.

Seere's Novella

Translation by Kestrel



The boy with eternal youth becomes the owner of a pure spirit...

"I loved only you......"

Seere opened his eyes when he felt his mother's presence.

"Mother! Mother where are you?
If you're here then answer me!"

But of course instead of his mother's figure, the boy's worried gaze found only Golem there. Seere, crestfallen, lowered his head, and mumbled to himself with a great sigh.

"A dream again......"

Ever since that day, his mother would always appear in his dreams without fail when he slept. Kind and beautiful Mother, Mother who loved only me... But that mother wasn't here anymore. His father as well had died. Seere was all alone.

"Seere, alone, wrong."

Having read his thoughts, Golem humbly protested. Seere floated a smile, holding onto the craggy body, and pressed his cheek to his only friend in the world as he replied.

"That's right, isn't it. Thank you, Golem."

So saying, he extended his tiny arms as far as he could and embraced Golem's gigantic leg, staying like that for a short moment. Mother used to always embrace Seere like this. Mother's breasts were warm, and soft, and smelled very nice. Since I'm tiny I can't do it like that, but Golem is an important friend. So I want to give him a hug, just the way Mother used to... And so, like that, before he knew it Seere had fallen asleep.

Having noticed the faint breathing that signified sleep, Golem's great hand moved slowly, gently placing Seere's little body on the soft meadowland beneath the shade of a rock. That movement seemed very much in appearance like that of a mother towards her own child, filled with deep affection.

The next morning, when Seere opened his eyes, Golem's figure was not by his side as he had expected.

"Golem......? Golem!"

At his involuntary shout, Golem's figure slowly appeared from the shade of the rocks a short ways off. Seere was relieved, but also wondered what Golem had been doing.

"Found, same smell, as Seere."

Seere was taken aback by those words. Right now, the two of them were near the valley that his long-lost sister Manah had been abandoned in. Golem, with its monster's sense of smell, must have caught his sister's scent. Manah, who had received not one bit of Mother's love. Seere, living in a haze of love from his mother, had forgotten about his sister. And finally Manah was...



"I have to find Manah.
And then, I have to apologize..."

Seere slowly stood up. Within his eyes shone the strong light of determination.

Arioch's Novella

Translation by Kestrel

Despair transformed the lone housewife into a monstrous murderer...



Recently the serial murderer that had so troubled society was captured—this news spread like wildfire across the kingdom of Niflheim. Moreover, the fact that the perpetrator was a perfectly ordinary elven housewife gave the people a great shock. Considering the fact that she'd aimed only at children, several victims had already come out, and so when the chance came to see this cruel figure, everyone gathered to see her profile.

Word having spread that the criminal, named Arioch, was being transferred from the town jail to a prison in the desert, crowds of people lined the streets to catch a glimpse of this bizarre figure who had committed such an unprecedented crime.

"I bet she's a monster woman that looks like an ogre."

"Nah, I heard she looks like a 300-year-old granny."

The crowd was filled with such irresponsible rumors. However, when the criminal appeared, led by soldiers of the Imperial Army, her figure completely defied their expectations. What appeared was not a monster nor a decrepit old witch, but an incredibly ordinary, yet beautiful young elven woman. The "hideously atrocious female cutthroat" that the crowd had been expecting was nowhere to be found. The previously raucous crowd went quiet one by one, as if they had all been caught in a still photograph, and the place was wrapped in a bizarre sort of silence. For these people, the criminal who had murdered defenseless innocents time and time again, and the elf woman before their eyes, were two beings they could not manage to connect no matter how hard they tried.

There was nothing but the sound of soldiers' footsteps echoing as the crowd sent them off, swallowing their collective breaths. However, Arioch saw nothing of what was going on around her. Held by sturdy soldiers on both sides, walking as if she were being dragged, she muttered the same words over and over again.

"My children...delicious children."

Even when her body was tightly bound, and she was placed into the prison, Arioch did not resist once, so docile that her jailers were unnerved. The girl did not seem to understand at all what was happening to her. Where is this place? Where did my adorable children go? Give me......give me back my children!

Suddenly, Arioch let out a scream that seemed to resound throughout the entire prison. A jailer holding a gag rushed into the prison as fast as he could, at the hair-raising noise. He must have been negligent due to her meekness back then. When the jailer moved to place the gag in her mouth, Arioch snapped at him with blinding speed. And the next instant, she'd bitten his fingers off without the slightest hesitation. This time, it was the jailer's scream that echoed throughout the halls. The girl smiled as if satisfied, leisurely swallowing the object in her mouth.





Leonard's Novella

Translation by Kestrel

His unique inclinations torment the fastidious hermit...

It happened shortly before Leonard went through puberty. His friends had already gone through the change in voice themselves, and little by little Leonard went through that change from boy to adult as well. When the boys around that age gathered together, talk would naturally turn to "gossip" about the opposite sex. Which girl is cute, no I think that girl's nice... In the midst of his friends' excitement in their childish arguments, Leonard alone had no interest in such tedious chatter. If they were to talk about the girls they liked, it was a single boy's profile that filled his gaze.

This flaxen-haired boy stood out among his friends as having particularly handsome features. When Leonard gazed at him, a mysteriously warm feeling rose up in his chest. What a beautiful face that is... At that moment, having felt his gaze, the boy suddenly turned and spoke to Leonard.

"Come to think of it, how about you, Leonard?"

Taken off-guard as he was, Leonard could say nothing at the moment, blushing as he turned his gaze downwards. Seeing him like that, his friends laughed at the strange guy, then turned back to their talk of the opposite sex. While Leonard mentally breathed a sigh of relief, it became clear to him then that he was different from his friends.





Nearly 20 years have passed since then. This unique disposition, this love of boys continued to torment Leonard, and he began living in the forest as a hermit. At first he had separated from his family and lived alone, but because of their being chased by the Imperial Army, he now gave shelter to his three younger brothers. Of course, not a single person in his family knew about his leanings. However, he could no longer restrain the desire that had heaped upon itself over the years, and would sneak into the woods behind the house to pleasure himself outside his brothers' notice. Thus he passed the days. "I cannot do this forever!" Coming home from the woods, he would think this each time he saw his brothers' faces, but ultimately he succumbed to the weakness of his own heart. Then the fated day came...

That day as usual, when it got dark, Leonard quietly snuck out of the house. With the pain of corruption stinging in his chest, and filled with expectations of pleasure, he quickened his pace as he headed towards the forest. Then, when Leonard's figure had completely vanished into the woods, soldiers with eerily glowing red eyes gathered before his house. His brothers, who noticed them outside the window, each called out for their brother to help them. But those voices would never reach Leonard's ears.

That time, I should have been the one to die.

But he had survived. Unable to even find a place to die, the blind hermit continues to wander aimlessly...



Verdelet's Novella

Translation byKestrel

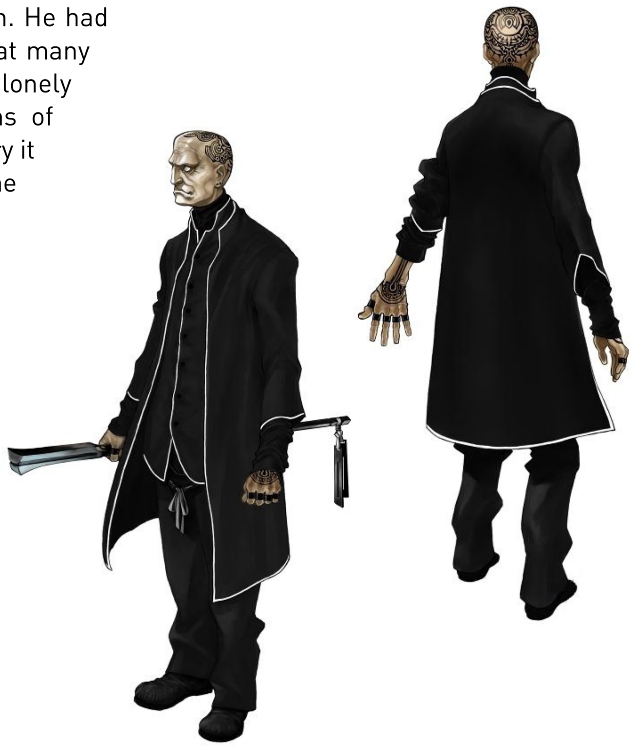
The man of God who hides inner conflict within his heart....

Verdelet was worried. While he had the title of hierarch, sometimes, he lost his understanding of God's true motives. Of course, even if he was hierarch he was still no more than a single human being, and could not expect to foresee everything God willed. However, recent incidents had far surpassed Verdelet's understanding. The Cult of the Watchers, the Imperial Army, and...the goddess Furiae. What in the world was God hoping for?

Verdelet gazed at the adjoining room as he took a break from his writings. Beyond the single wall that separated them, was the present goddess Furiae's living room. Thinking of her, Verdelet felt an ache in his chest. At the tender age of 13, having still to recover from the trauma of seeing her parents slaughtered before her eyes, the girl had been separated from her brother and fiance... Verdelet could not help but think that God had dealt her far too cruel a blow. When he first met Furiae, there had been an emptiness in her eyes not at all typical of a 14-year-old girl, the mere memory of which sent a shiver through his spine. She certainly appeared to be a pitiful girl on the outside, but the air she gave was entirely like that of an old woman on the verge of death. Furiae was...a hollow shell.

As hierarch, Verdelet's duty was to ensure the safety of the goddess. Until now, the goddesses he had worked with would be obstinate at first, but many of them would open up towards him over time. However, Furiae was different. It had already been several years since she became the goddess, and yet he could count the number of times she had spoken to him on one hand. Of course, when he spoke to her she never failed to reply. But her tone stayed quiet, and not once could a sign of emotion be felt from her. Verdelet had now given up on all attempts to open her heart.

At a time like this, if the dragon were here... His thoughts always found themselves wandering towards this conclusion. He had immense power, and had gained respect from a great many people as hierarch, but in truth, this was a dreadfully lonely existence. If Verdelet gave a single command, tens of thousands of people would lay down their lives to carry it out, no matter how trivial. But more than that, what he really wanted was a single companion with which he could converse as an equal. Before, the one to carry that role had been the dragon that was his pact partner. But the dragon had fossilized long ago, and fallen into eternal sleep. A long sigh escaped from Verdelet's mouth.



News of the war seemed to be coming in every day, notifying them that danger was approaching the castle they currently resided in. It seemed the day was not far away that he and the goddess would be living a life of vagrancy together. I wonder if I will be able to protect the goddess when that time comes: "Oh God, give me strength!" He let out an involuntary prayer, but there was no response.



Drakengard's Story Summary

The Empire is attacking the Castle protecting the thirteenth Goddess of the Seal, Furiae. Outside, an army of red-eyed soldiers is amassed at the gates, fighting against the Union. There, in the middle of this living hell, we meet Caim, Furiae's brother. He is slashing soldiers with terrifying ease, killing dozens of them. However, despite his insatiable hatred, his time has come sooner than he wished for. He is stroked by a nearby soldier. Gravely wounded, he walks toward the Castle's gate trying to rejoin with his sister.

Inside the Castle's walls, he meets with a nailed down dragon. Ever since his parent's tragic death, Caim has a deep hatred for dragons. However, they are both in bad shape, and they both want to live. Forging a pact is the answer. They both get healed and the red dragon is unchained. Caim's voice was the price for this pact, but he can at least communicate telepathically with his new ally. They take off toward some nearby Empire's dirigibles.

Pact:

A pact is a contract between a human and a beast in which they become "Pact Partners". The human gains supernatural powers but must pay some price, usually its most treasured feature. If one should be fatally injured, it means death for both.

A pact can also be broken, however, the details are vague and unclear.

The pact system doesn't become a widespread concept in branches where Zero and Mikhail never forge a pact despite One and Gabriella forging one years before them.

After having destroyed every Empire's airships, the dragon dives and burns the enemy's infantry. With the beast on their side, the Union has now a clear advantage. Even the Red-eyed soldiers are no match against "God's messenger". Back on foot, Caim process inside the Castle, searching for Furiae. He meets her alongside Inuart who suggests taking refuge in the Elven village, a neutral place.

Caim and his party arrive at the Elf village. But the Empire has been there first, and about them is the aftermath of its unlawful invasion. Inuart despairs as he lays eyes upon the wasted ruins. Then Caim and the dragon hear a voice. The voice is that of the hierarch Verdelet, the spiritual leader of the Union and guardian of the four seals: the seal of the temple, the seal of the desert, the seal of the forest, and the seal of the goddess. After seeing Furiae and Inuart go to join Verdelet, Caim searches the village. There, beside an Imperial soldier's body, is a message written in blood:

Speak not the Watchers,
Draw not the Watchers,
Write not the Watchers,
Sculpt not the Watchers,
Sing not the Watchers,
Call not the Watchers' name.

Fun fact:

The Elves' territory geographically overlaps with our real-world neutral Switzerland.

Caim shrugs off the ominous warning and continues checking the village. At its far end, he comes across a dying elf who tells him the villagers were taken to the shrine of the Cult of the Watchers. Caim begins to suspect that some evil bond connects the Cult and the Empire and decides to fly to the shrine.

But Caim only finds ruins and the Empire's army there. In the shrine's nave, he finds a villager begging him to save the people from his village. He kicks the man's face with his foot and head for the valley of faeries where the village is located. Only the spilling of Imperial blood can sate his lust for revenge. Caim goes to the village not to save lives, but to take them. With rage in his heart, he flies through the dark fog that shrouds the valley.

There in the forest, a man named Leonard, bereft of all light and hope, is watching the house he and his brothers once lived in, burned to the ground by the Empire's soldiers. He tries to kill himself using a dagger, but he can't even do that. Then a malicious faerie comes by and exploits Leonard's despair to forge a Pact with him.

Learn more about Leonard in his novella, on page 123.

Caim senses a nearby pact partner and decides to head in that direction. He meets with Leonard. He is now blind; the price he had to pay for this unwanted contract. After exchanging a few words and praying for the soldiers killed by Caim, he chooses to join them. Maybe dying for a greater cause could absolve his sins. Caim suddenly loses contact with Verdelet, to whom he had entrusted Furiae and Inuart. Concerned for their safety, the small group immediately flies to the desert.

In the middle of the night, Caim meets with Furiae, alone. According to her, Inuart and Verdelet have been captured by the Empire and taken to a dungeon. After a goodbye hug, Caim and Leonard fly off, leaving Furiae alone once again.

During the flight, the red dragon takes the opportunity to ask Caim about his sister: is he aware of Furiae's feeling toward him? Did he ever sense the passionate love buried inside her?

Furiae knew that anyone who lives as a goddess must part from whatever mortal bonds she has in her life to avoid contaminating the seal. She didn't want to accept her duty since it meant abandoning her brother, yet she eventually gave into her new fate. Since then, Furiae desperately tried to kill her emotions and forget her love for Caim. However, he is still oblivious to her feelings, even after what the red dragon told him.



On the other side, those feelings were not lost on Inuart who harbor deep jealousy towards Caim for drawing his lover's attention away from him. Kept prisoner in an Imperial dungeon, he is tormented and brainwashed by Manah, the high priestess of the Cult. His insecurities and obsessive love for Furiae are being used against him and soon, he swears allegiance to the Empire.

Caim and Leonard finally arrive at an Imperial dungeon where the dragon believe they are held. They fly in a wide circle around the perimeter, burning any soldier in sight. No longer guarded, the prisoners including Verdelet escape. The latter meets with Caim at the entrance. He explains that Inuart has been taken somewhere else. But even more worrying is the Empire's ultimate goal: to destroy all seals and summon the "Seed of Resurrection". Verdelet asks Caim to prevent this outcome by defending the seal of the desert, where the Empire is already nearing its goal.

Despite flying toward the desert in no time, they are too late: the seal has been broken. They met with Furiae and choose to camp for the night. Suddenly, Verdelet and the dragon sense the voice of a pact partner: an alarming voice, full of madness. They decide to check it out. The voice comes from the burning ruins of an imperial dungeon. There, in the middle of the chaos, they met with a beautiful elf who approach them. Behind her, two floating spirits are following the women: Undine, a water spirit and Salamander, a fire spirit. She calls herself Arioch, and she is "looking for some sweet children," she says. She moves awkwardly, her gaze is disturbing... All the sudden, she snaps onto Caim's neck, seemingly trying to eat him alive. Verdelet apprehends her using some lock spell. He would like her to join the group, for her own good, as well as for others. Arioch gets up and follows them.

When the Empire had level Niflheim, Arioch's village, she was an ordinary housewife. This day her beloved husband and son were slaughtered by the Imperial Army, the shock of which completely shattered her heart. Madness dwells in her eyes, so that others do not dare to even speak with her. Still, the way she bursts into sudden laughter in the middle of her screams, as if remembering something, is an act so strange as to stand out from even the most eccentric of normal people.

Having been overcome by insanity, Arioch murdered and devoured young children. Her crazed mind thought that by doing so she could "protect" them within her womb. After these bloody incidents had come up many times, Arioch was captured by the Imperial Army, and taken into custody.

Learn more about Arioch in her novella, on page 122.



On the road toward the next seal, Caim and his friends are sitting around a campfire. He feels uneasy, something menacing is approaching. A dragon flies over their heads, casting an ominous shadow on their camp. It's Inuart! He lands near Furiae. His eyes are blood-red and he looks incredibly confident and powerful: nothing like the person Caim used to know. Inuart may have acquired the power he longed for, however in the process, he became nothing but a minion of the Empire. Even his talent as a singer and musician has been taken from him: the price for the pact with this black dragon.

But none of this matter for Inuart. He finally has the strength to protect Furiae, and bring her back to the Empire. Whatever she likes it or not, he will do it. Of course, Caim is having none of it. The prince jumps in his direction. Their blade clash against each other while the red and black dragon are fighting in the sky. Inuart pushes his rival to the ground. As he gets up, he gets a better glimpse of the black dragon...Something is off, he recognizes that dragon. His eyes open wide: that's it! It's the one which killed his parents.

All this hatred he gathered those last six years, he is ready to unleash all of it. Without paying any attention to Inuart, Caim rushes toward his arch-nemesis. However, he is not able to reach his target: the black creature rises into the air and fire at him and the red dragon. They are both heavily wounded. Unable to move, they are forced to watch Inuart flying away with Furiae in his arms. With the seal of the goddess in their hands, the Empire is one step closer to plunge the world in darkness and chaos. After a few days, Caim is ready again: he will not let his sister die for their evil plan.



In the mountains between the Empire and the Union territories, a young boy called Seere is panicking. His sister Manah has disappeared, his parents are unmoving. He gives his mother a kiss to wake her up, just like in the fairy tales she used to read him before bed. He shakes her body, but it does nothing. Everyone has been slaughtered by the Empire army, all excect for Seere. It was thanks to her mother, who forced him to make a Pact with Golem. Normally, golems are non-sentient and unthinking tools manipulated by a sorcerer. However, her dying will gifted this golem with sorrow. The price for this Pact was Seere's "time": his ability to age. Thus, he can never grow up. But Seere is okay with that; despite being alone, all his relatives dead, and his village leveled, Golem is here to protect him.

Seere is the last descendant of a generation of golem sorcerers. Unlike Manah, he inherited the gift to control the stone guardians from his parents. This difference between the two twins was the main reason his mother favored him over Manah: he was the rightful successor of the family, and she was merely a mistake. Of course, Seere felt guilty for monopolizing her mother's affection, and now, he is trying to find her. "She must be alive," he thought, without any clue to what happened to her. He has no way of knowing that she became the high priestess of the Cult of the Watchers.

The last time he saw Manah, his mother was taking her deep into the mountains. She brought her in the middle of nowhere and abandoned her there. Shocked, and totally lost, she stayed there, unable to move.

Her tragic childhood, in which kicks and screams replaced maternal love, has left her emotionally damaged and mentally fragile. This caused her to have an intense desire to be loved, to the point that all she ever wanted was love. This allowed her to fall under the influence of the Watchers, who use her as a tool for destruction.

Learn more about Seere in his novella, on page 121.

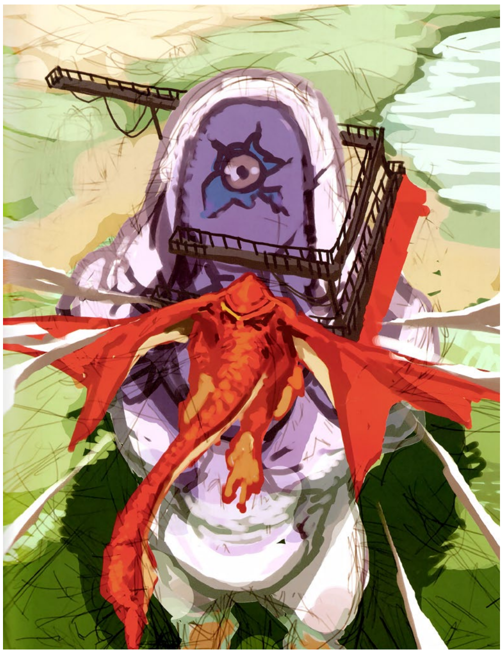
Back to Caim and his band. While traveling toward the Empire territory, they meet with Seere. The young boy begs Caim to venture in the valley her sister went missing. He agrees, but of course, no trace of Manah is to be found. Instead, they bump into an Empire army. Orcs, goblins, trolls, and ogres...the Empire uses many subhumans as mercenary soldiers, all of which Caim loves to slaughter.

While everything became silent again, a scream is heard: this is the faeries' death cry, meaning that the seal of the forest has fallen to the relentless Empire. However, Verdelet senses an even worst outcome... According to him, all terrestrial seals have been destroyed. The seal of the sea has also been attacked without them realizing it! This means that only one seal remains: Furiae, who must endure the pain on her own.

Hearing that, Caim immediately takes off, followed by the red dragon, Leonard, Verdelet, and now Seere. Furiae could die at any moment now. They catch up with the Union army; as a last resort against the apocalypse, they have amassed all available forces at the gates of the Empire. Both armies are posted on each side of a vast hilly plain. The attack begins, however, halfway toward the Imperial lines, the Union soldiers come to a stop, terrified by what they are witnessing: the Empire's evil factories have built immense one-eyed war monsters. Three of them are rising on the horizon. Before them, the Union forces can only turn and flee. Caim and the dragon take to the air to destroy the cyclops and turn defeat into glorious victory.

Fighting them reveals to be harder than expected: their only weakness is their giant eye. However, this is also from where they blast giant energy beams. One after the other, the cyclops fall under the dragon's fire. The Union army can finally prepare itself for a second assault. Naturally, Caim joins them on foot. Killing Imperials is his favorite sport after all.

After hours of battle, Caim kills the last enemy. The valley is drenched in blood. The uniformly red scenery is only alleviated by the metallic grey from the imperials' helmets. The Union has won. Gathered around Caim, the soldiers are celebrating their victory with their war hero, who brandishes his sword toward the sky in response. At the same moment, the sky turns red and massive fireballs from a floating fortress smash onto the battlefield. The Union's victory and its army are lost in a succession of incredibly powerful explosions and the valley is turned into a hellish wasteland.



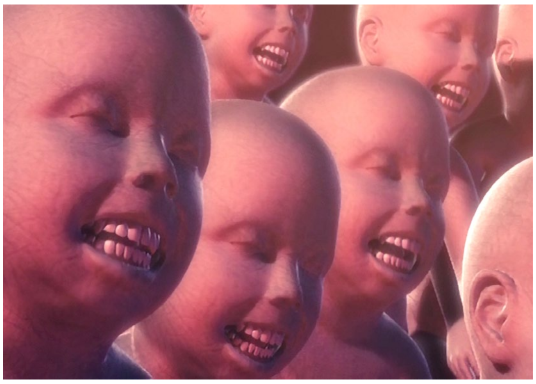


Then, the ground starts to shake. Thousands of corpses are digging through the dirt and rise again as undead warriors. Caim kills some of them before flying away on the red dragon. Is the goddess of the seal dead? Is it why the world has fallen into chaos and despair? According to Leonard, she is still alive. He is sensing her southward, inside an ocean fortress. There, Caim finds nothing but he realizes that Leonard's hunch wasn't unfounded: in its depths, he finds a magical space-bridge leading him inside the floating fortress seen earlier. That must be it! Surely, Furiae must be somewhere inside the Empire's headquarters. Through this maze of stone and corridors, they find their way but meet with Manah instead. Seere barely recognizes his own sister: she speaks nonsense, and act in an uncanny manner, she sings, laughs and dances without a care in the world.



Her mind is gone, her humanity is gone. Even with her brother to his knees, begging her to notice him, she doesn't. Love is what she always wanted, and this is exactly what the Watchers gave her. She has a place to be now, she is loved and looked after. She is accepted. Realizing there is nothing left of her sister inside this girl's body, Seere asks Golem to end her life. With one hand, the giant squashes her like an insect, leaving nothing but a pool of blood and organs. Soon after, the fortress starts to rumble: Manah, as the high priestess and agent of the Watchers, was the one keeping the fortress floating. Without her, this place is lost. Caim and his group barely escape and watch as the fortress crash on the ground. Still inside was Inuart, clutches Furiae in his arms, and together they vanish in a blaze of blinding light.

With the instrument of the Watchers gone, it seems that the menace is passed. However, the last seal has fallen, meaning that the world's destruction has only just begun. Reason and logic in the world collapse. From the sky, grotesque beasts begin to fall, and the banquet of destruction begins. In the madding sky flies our group flies, ready to battle the Watchers.



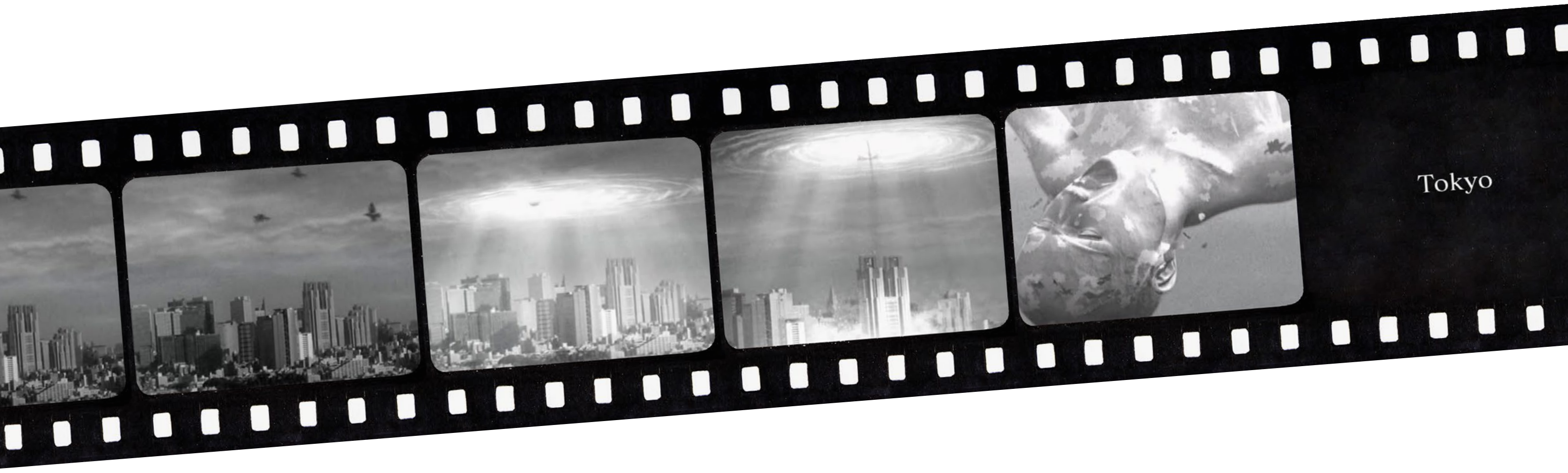


They have taken multiple forms throughout history. This time, they appeared in this world as giant flying babies with electrical wings. In the scene of such horror, each one acts independently: Caim kills anything in sight. Arioch is thrilled by those giant babies, and feed on the ones killed by our protagonist. Verdelet is hiding behind some ruins, horrified and in shock to what the world has become. His is a man who devoted his entire life to religion and the divine teachings. How could he pray? To whom? What gods can help them now? Inuart falls into despair: "I am already dead. Where this body drops and rots is of no matter now" he says.

No matter how many grotesqueries Caim kills, more are coming, indefinitely. They begin to gather around them. Soon, all attempt to escape seem useless. Arioch is separated from the group. She looks up at the babies, and as if they knew her peculiar tendencies, they come after her and devour her.

In the sky, an even greater threat has appeared: the Queen-beast. According to the prophecy, the Watchers' mother is capable of warping time itself.

Surrounded from all direction, Caim, Seere, and Leonard face death. The latter has decided the redeem himself. His cowardice has to stop here, and for the first and last time, he must take action and protect his partners. Using his Pact Partner's magic, he self-destructs in a blinding explosion of light. He has opened a passage for them, hoping they could stop the Queen-beast. As she is devouring time and eroding reality, her stomach has swelled considerably. After having dropped Seere, Caim and the dragon dive down from the sky into the heart of the beast. They are engulfed in a blaze of pure white light, and together man, dragon, and monster fall tumbling into a chasm that splits time and space.



Shinjuku, Tokyo - June 12th, 2003

The weather is cloudy, the birds are singing, the city is humming. Suddenly, the sky turns bright, something is piercing through the clouds: it's the Queen-beast, who crashes into the business district. Caim and the red dragon follow and appear through the multidimensional portal. The fight will continue in the Japanese capital. Unable to blast fire, the dragon is forced to fight the beast using nothing but magic.

Defeated by the protagonist and his partner, the Queen-beast falls to the ground and breaks in countless white flakes.

"It is done! At last...", whispers the red dragon. Before they could even cherish their victory, a fighter jet of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's 6th Air Wing, 303rd Squadron shoots down the dragon with a missile strike. They fall and impaled themselves atop Tokyo Tower.

It is highly recommended to read Appendix 1, 2, and 3 before continuing with the next chapter.



CHAPTER 3

NieR Replicant

The Glory of Mankind comes to an abrupt End

NieR Replicant – Drama CD

CD1 / 01: The Sky of the End



This Drama CD was released in April 2011. The story of this Drama—written by Yoko Taro—tells of events at the origin of Project Gestalt and the Replicant System. Disk 2 also contains an alternative high school scenario at Private Replicant High School. This story will however not be included in this book.

This first track takes place at the junction between Ending E of Drakengard and the story of NieR and later, NieR:Automata. Translation by /u/spffn.

TV Announcer:	The weather is likely to turn south this afternoon. However, from tomorrow, Friday the 13th, forecasts indicate we'll be getting clearer skies. And now, we continue with temperature reports for –
Lady:	Huh? You hear that?
Man:	What?
	(Loud, violent shaking.)
Man:	What the hell? An earthquake?
Child:	Ow ow!
Lady:	The sky – look at the sky!
Man:	Something's falling – Run for it!
Lady:	Oh god!
	(People screaming and running.)
Child:	Mommy! Mommy!!
Officer:	Only the area surrounding the government center is dangerous – please go around it!
Man:	Stop shoving!
Officer:	We still have not gotten the injured out – please don't push! Can – are you listening!?
Lady:	What is that sound?! Make it stop!!
Man:	It's on fire!
	(The Queen Beast's song plays.)
TV Announcer:	Following up on our last report, the massive object which appeared above the area of Shinjuku has begun to collapse—yes—ah, yes sir! Breaking news: according to the Japanese Airforce, the planes which suddenly appeared, were part of a counterattack! I repeat, according to the Japanese Airforce, the planes were part of a counterattack!

CD1 / 02: Report #1 (Devola) *Translation by /u/spffn*

PROJECT GESTALT: INFORMATIONAL RELEASE #01035.

In 2003, a massive unknown object—commonly referred to as "Giant"—appeared above the Shinjuku district of Tokyo, bringing about the 6/12 incident. Our opinions on the incident and the circumstances of ensuing events originating from it will be outlined here.

Regarding June 12th's "Giant" that appeared above Shinjuku: Although this resulted in enormous financial losses, and despite the wide-scale panic that followed, the number of physical injuries was minimal. However, after considering all possible origins of the various events which occurred following this, we determined it was appropriate to report it as the instigating factor in our initial Project Gestalt reports.

December 2003, half a year after the fall of both the red dragon and "Giant", outbreaks began of a rare disease in which the whole body undergoes a change in color before death. Christened "White Chlorination Syndrome", the number of infected persons and areas affected by the disease continued to rapidly spread.

The remains of the red dragon, believed to be one of the causes of this disease, were reportedly collected by the Japanese government. But in the effort to leave nothing out of this release, it is noted that the current whereabouts of these remains are unknown.

Now, our current issue at hand is the number of formal objections that have been made by the World Purification Committee. In the past several months, it's been confirmed that a growing number of Tokyo residents infected with WCS have been surviving... Rather than dying, these individuals fall into a violent rage, becoming the early form of beings called "Legion." The ensuing battle with Legion would last for upwards of 30 years, having become the single greatest threat to humanity across the globe.

2003

The Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) observes the situation and plans counter-measures. An emergency Cabinet meeting takes place regarding the situation.

Approximately 4:00 PM - the Giant falls and breaks apart. The composition of the Giant is unable to be determined. The substance is similar to sodium chloride but lacks any manner of mass or weight. It quickly disperses and vanishes from the area. Shortly after the fall of the Giant, Bravo-One (Callsign "Scarface") of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's 6th Air Wing, 303rd Squadron shoots down the Dragon with a missile strike.

The body is later recovered from atop Tokyo Tower and taken to a government research facility for testing. This event becomes known as the "6-12 Incident".

It results in 56 fatalities, 320 injuries, and an economic cost of over 60 billion yen. A gag order is issued regarding the events of 6-12, but videos and photos of the incident circulate on the Internet soon thereafter. Fears of terrorism, foreign plots, and other conspiracy theories soon follow the extraordinary event.



2004

February: An explosive increase in infected by the unknown disease in Shinjuku, Tokyo.

April: Among those infected by the disease, a few isolated cases begin going into berserk psychotic fits. Due to the massing infected in the area, a de-industrialization of Shinjuku takes place. The international community pressures Japan to increase its efforts into researching and treating the disease.

May: The instances of victims of the disease turning berserk increases. Research continues on the reason behind those who perish to the illness and those who go into violent fits.

June: A medical research group researching the disease makes a presentation in which the illness is dubbed "White Chlorination Syndrome". Tokyo Prefectural Hall is relocated considering the disease's spread. Proposals to relocate the national government in Nagatachō and the Emperor's Residence are quickly dismissed.

July: The infection level in Shinjuku reaches its highest level yet. Roadblocks are set up and all transportation into the area is ceased. Martial law is declared.

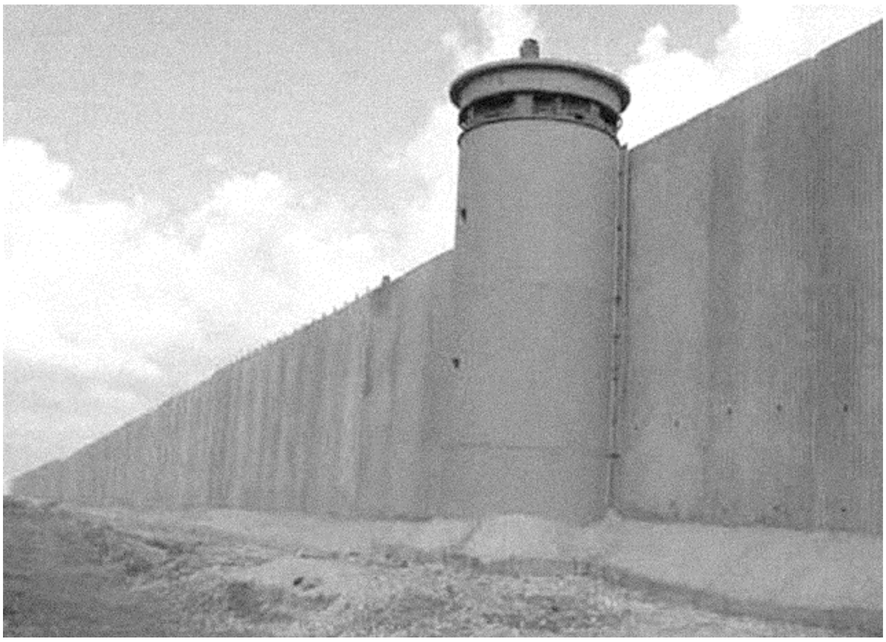
September: The Japanese government receives further reports of infection trajectories and announces a plan to physically cordon and seal off Shinjuku. Opposition movements and protests soon occur. Newspaper surveys indicate the decision to be widely unpopular while online polls yield a more favorable response. In Shinjuku, a popular celebrity is attacked and killed by a person infected with WCS. The media immediately jumps on the story and public opinion sways toward approval of sealing Shinjuku.

October: Shinjuku Sealing Plan is implemented. An immense wall, later dubbed the Wall of Jericho, is erected to physical seal Shinjuku from the outside world. It is announced that operations to suppress berserk individuals infected with WCS will continue within the walls. The international community widely criticizes the Japanese government's decision. Demonstrations and protests occur in several countries across the globe. Research continues on finding a cure and treatment of WCS.

December: Transmissions sent by members of the media who voluntarily remained behind the wall in Shinjuku are abruptly cut off. The final film relayed is ended with a scream as a giant white being appearing. The image is not publicly released but is soon leaked on the internet.







2005

December: The JSDF and organized vigilante groups continue to rout berserkers from WCS within the Walls of Jericho. The Japanese government announces that transmission of WCS infection has steadily decreased and quieted for the time being. Research continues on causes and possible vaccination against the disease.

2007

October: An irregularity appears in an aerial satellite photograph of Shinjuku. A strange black "dot" appears in photographs over the area. Observations of the "dot" are observed and reported. However, further investigation is deemed unnecessary...



2006

May: Research results on WCS are presented to the government. It is reported that the mutation that occurs leading to fatality or complete psychotic breakdown is determined on the genetic level. It is theorized that people with slight irregularities in some chromosomes have a high probability of going berserk. Results of the research are not publicly announced and further research continues in secret. It is later revealed that this theory is incorrect as the interpretation was a result of falsified test data.

Unknown Month: An attack by an unknown faction occurs on the research facility holding the remains of the Dragon. On-site security, local police, and the JSDF manage to repel the attack. Rumors and conspiracies swirl regarding the identity of those responsible for the incident, with claims of everything between religious cults and the United States being the responsible party. The JSDF's countrywide security measures increase dramatically.

Translation by Defade

Investigation Report

2003/11/04 22:53: Debriefed on the project. It's a highly classified case. No room for rejection. Extremely unwilling. In the first place, what the hell do they want a particle physics specialist like me to do?

2003/11/09 23:06: Saw the object assumed to be the cause for the incident. It must be some kind of bad joke. Who would believe that a 'dragon' and 'giant' fell on Shinjuku? However, it's true that the substance's energy characteristics are abnormal. The plan was to begin detailed investigations tomorrow. Now I get why I'm called to this project.

2003/12/04 22:45: The food here is really bad. It's like they were trying to make do by stuffing tons of NSG into it. Well, it's free, so I can't really complain that much. But I really wish they'd improve, if only for the sake of keeping researchers motivated.

2004/02/08 23:17: Another victim of the rare disease appeared in the department. I heard bad rumors about this. Something about the researched particle being the cause. It's true that the substance is shrouded in mysteries. I'm sure some people would buy that. I'm worried that the research will be delayed.

2004/02/22/ 23:43: Contacted by Watanabe. There's a high possibility that the particle is the cause of the rare disease after all. Direct contact was forbidden. Research is only going to get harder from now on. However, it's pretty much confirmed that the particles which make up the giant change their energy levels according to the state of the observer. What on earth are they reacting to? Variations in heat and brainwaves? Changes in the water amount in the atmosphere due to sweat? Some of them are saying that it's reacting to changes in a person's mental state, but that's just occult talk, not science.

2004/02/25 23:07: To investigate the relationship between the mysterious disease and the particle, the corpse was moved into the research room. My first impression was that of a white statue. Similar to recordings of the giant that I've been shown. I thought it was turning white due to denatured proteins, but it was composed of purely NaCl—in other words, it's turning into salt. It's much higher than the amount in a human body, just where is it absorbing the sodium from? The victims are said to suffer from auditory hallucinations, so maybe the grey matter is getting destroyed first. Well, I'll leave that part to the neuroscientists.

2005/02/24 01:15: Contacted by Kobayashi. Succeeded in cultivating tissue D from the sea of origin. The density of particle G seems to be important after all. Now research on tissue D could proceed smoothly. But the vitality of tissue D is quite surprising. It's rather resistant to heat and impact. Planning to perform experiments on its resistance on a grander scale.

2005/03/08 00:45: No matter how much I look into it, the energy change accompanying the cultivation of tissue D defies the law of conservation of energy. It's not even on a micro level like quantum physics – how could you explain the energy failure on such a macro level? I guess the remaining energy came from unknown particle G after all.

2005/11/15 02:11: Seems like there was some sort of accident during the experiment on tissue D's resistance. Are we being blocked off or what? I don't get that much information these days. I feel like we're doing too many rash experiments just to get some results. Wonder what got the higher up's knickers in a twist.

2005/12/24 01:45: Christmas Eve. Ever since the accident, security level has been bumped up to red, so I can't even leave. I told my husband to get a present for my daughter, so let's hope he didn't forget. However, a teddy bear might've been a bit too childish for her. Statistics dictate that girls in her age group like stuffed toys, but standard deviation for preferences is simply too big, so I can't really put too much trust in that. I'll ask her what she wants next time.

2006/01/08 01:33: Rumors about black monsters are spreading. Mass hysteria due to stress from the recent state of affairs? Not only are absurd experiments being continued, but security is also abnormally tight. What exactly is going on? Is it related to how investigation reports on tissue D aren't coming this way anymore?

2006/04/15 02:22: I'm really not feeling so good recently. I guess I am pretty tired. The recent mainstream law of conservation of energy expansion theory that sprung from the parallel dimension explanation works perfectly fine with calculations, but I can't help but think it's forcibly tacked on. Moreover, saying that the giant and dragon are from parallel worlds is sci-fi territory. As a scientist, I can't accept this. My ears are ringing.

2006/04/19 03:11: I'm in really bad shape. There's some buzzing in my ears that sounds like bells. It's a hindrance to sleep.

2006/04/22 06:24: I ca n he ar so n ds

2008

February: The Wall of Jericho around Shinjuku is destroyed from within. At the time of the barrier's destruction, sounds like the ones heard during the 6/12 Incident are also heard. A massive number of berserk white creatures (later dubbed "The Legion") pour out from behind the wall. They begin slaughtering all humans they encounter. A creature with crimson eyes (later designated "Red Eye") is observed leading the Legion's movements. The JSDF immediately begins an operation to repel the Legion's assault. The operation encounters difficulties and amasses many casualties due to the Red Eye's organization of the Legion's attack.

May: White Chlorination Syndrome re-emerges and rapidly spreads. First cases of WCS outside of Tokyo reported. WCS spreads to the rest of the Kantō region by the end of the month.

August: The research facility studying the Dragon is secretly re-located outside Japan. The new location is classified, but a popular theory stated its new location was in the United States.

September: With the mounting danger in Tokyo due to the Legion, a decision is made to relocate the Japanese government and Imperial residence to the relatively unscathed Kyushu region.

October: Cases of WCS rise dramatically across the region, as do those transforming into Legion. Battles between the JSDF and The Legion erupt all across Honshu. The JSDF suffers heavy casualties due to the Legion's resistance to available weaponry. A mass exodus by civilians from Honshu into Kyushu and Hokkaido occurs. Many more try to flee Japan entirely. Several countries across the globe enact policies barring Japanese refugees due to fear of WCS spreading outside Japan. Crime skyrockets amidst the chaos. The Japanese government is hampered by increasing interference from overseas. A military alliance with America is suggested, but its terms are unfavorable to Japan; other allies of the nation advise against the proposal...

2009

January: Feeling vulnerable from a military defense standpoint, the Japanese government agrees to a joint combat operation with the United States. The US-Japan Joint Operation Accord soon begins. The United States transports Legion corpses and captives back to America for study in military research. The US Army arrives in Japan by the end of the month and joins forces with the JSDF in efforts to repel the Legion attack. The battle between the Legion and humanity escalates. The Legion is slowly pushed back.

March: Seemingly limitless Legion continues to pour out of Shinjuku, despite heavy losses on their side in the past few months. Shinjuku is carpet-bombed in several military operations. Only a slight reduction in the number of Legion present in the city is observed following the bombings runs. Research on counter-measures against the Legion continues but makes little headway.

April: The US and Japanese governments consider the nuclear option on Shinjuku in an effort to rout the growing Legion at the source. Plans to utilize nuclear weaponry on the city are publicly announced. While Japanese opinion on dropping the nuke is mixed, the international community greatly supports the decision.



August 6th: An atomic bomb is dropped on Shinjuku. The date is coincidental, but links to the Hiroshima tragedy are almost immediately brought up by the media. Later that month, several other key areas of dense Legion activity are also attacked with nuclear weapons. The majority of Japan is ultimately affected by the bombing campaign. Shinjuku is decimated in the nuclear fires. It becomes referred to as "Ground Zero".

November: Survey reports the nuclear campaign in Japan a success. All traces of Legion activity in the country have been eradicated...

2010

February: First recorded case of White Chlorination Syndrome outside of Japan reported in China. Legion appearance in Asia confirmed soon after.

March: Outbreak of WCS confirmed in several countries across the planet. Research on the disease is intensified internationally.

April: WCS and Legion appear worldwide; rioting and civil unrest accelerate on a global scale as the infection spreads. The survival of Legion commander "Red Eye" confirmed.

June: Research on the corpse of the dead Dragon proves the "Multiple-Origin Theory", which states that another world exists in a parallel universe from this one. The Dragon and the Giant of the 6/12 Incident are determined to have intruded from this parallel world. Research on the intrusion from the other world reveals the presence of particles which should not exist in this universe. These particles are found to be remnants of the Giant of the 6/12 Incident. The otherworld element is labeled "Maso". The origin of the WCS is announced to be caused by Maso. Transmission of the infection is shown to be through bodily fluids and waste. Coughing and saliva can also transmit Maso particles through the air. No physical means, such as heat from explosives or nuclear weapons, can destroy Maso generated WCS. Ironically, the nuclear attacks on Japan only served to spread the WCS inducing element on a global scale. Breakthroughs in various technological fields come about with the discovery and study of Maso. Research on the "Multiple-Origin Theory" continues and reveals that energy is stored equally through the multiple worlds.

2011

October: The classified facility conducting research on the Dragon's corpse is attacked and destroyed by an unknown armed party. The body of the Dragon vanishes. Rumors circulate regarding religious cults and rival governments being the perpetrators, but no organization steps forward to claim responsibility. Any investigation into the attack is quickly suppressed. No further information is revealed...

2014

March: The Gestalt Project begins in an effort to contain the spread of WCS. Research is conducted into "Gestaltisierung" - the process in which souls are removed from the human body utilizing Maso reactions. First Gestalt experimentation on a human succeeds. The test subject's soul is removed from its body and later reunited with no ill-consequences.

May: Using Maso to absorb energy from other worlds, experiments succeed in breaking the law of conservation of mass by "creating something from nothing". The process is later called "magic."

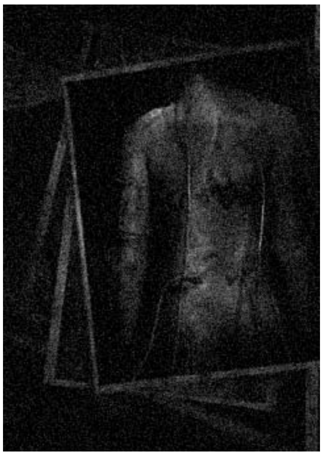
2015

Unknown Month: The Gestaltisierung process is revealed to the public and is wildly rejected by the populace. Despite the lack of popularity of Project Gestalt, research continues in finding a solution for the potential problem of a Gestaltized soul which has lost its body.



2016







February: "Luciferase", a medical compound which can greatly slow the onset of White Chlorination Syndrome is developed.

May: Luciferase is administered to select individuals who soon form an elite military squad with hopes of directly combating the growing Legion. This organization succeeds in several battles again the Legion forces. Several similar movements utilizing Luciferase vaccinated squads crop up worldwide. Several of these units band together to form the "1st Crusade" squadron. 1st Crusade Squad battles the Legion, but are ultimately defeated and the entire unit is wiped out.

December: Research discovers Luciferase to be more effective in younger patients. Children with exemplary physical ability are given preference for Luciferase treatment and urged into Legion combating squads. The "Hamelin Organization" is formed. It is an internationally funded group committed to train soldiers, mostly teenagers due to the Luciferase compatibility, to fight the Legion...

2018

Officials inside the Japanese government call for a stronger standing defense force in opposition to growing concerns over the military reach of the Hamelin Organization.
The "National Research Weapons Laboratory" is founded with the purpose of studying the weaponization of "maso" particles. Their primary objective is to enhance human beings with maso's energy potential.

2023

Heavy battles between the Legion destabilizes world economies and creates a massive gap in wealth between the rich and poor.
Massive slums and shanty-towns expand all over the world. Civil unrested escalates.

2019

The Legion and the Hamelin Organization Crusaders continue to engage in battle across the globe and fight to a near stalemate. Casualties are massive on both sides of the conflict.

The Hamelin Organization's influence grows in countries with great numbers of young potential recruits to the crusaders.

The already struggling Japanese economy is further strained as most remaining survivors gather in Kyushu.

CD1 / 03: White Troops

Translation by /u/spffn

Second Lieutenant:	This is eastern Shinjuku's Ichigaya #29! We are facing resistance from the enemy! I repeat, resistance from the enemy!
Soldier:	Fire, fire, FIRE!
Second Lieutenant:	What are you doing? There is no point!
Soldier:	Get out of the way! Aaaa—Oh god—my leg—MY LEG!
Second Lieutenant:	This is Ichigaya #29, we need backup! All available backup!
Far-off Soldier:	Sir! We need you over here!
Second Lieutenant:	Damn it, Legion[1] doesn't miss a beat— they just keep coming one after the other.
Soldier:	Commander! Please, request a full retreat!
Commander:	We already did—as soon as the advance troops from Hamelin[2] arrive, we pull out! Everyone, prepare to withdraw! Be ready to leave in an instant!
Soldier:	Hold on! Commander—something's not right. Legions… running?
Commander:	That's ridiculous! I've never heard of them fleeing!
Soldier:	What the hell is…
	(A monstrous cry, screaming and the sound of smashing)
Commander:	What the—it's massive!
Second Lieutenant:	Headquarters! Headquarters, do you read me?! This is Ichigaya #29, we're facing a large-scale enemy—estimated total of 30 meters in size, with 4, no… I can't count the number of legs! It's like some kind of bug…
Commander:	Fall back! Fall back immediately!
Soldier:	Commander, it's no use! Legion's cut us off from our route!
Soldier:	What is happening?! You're telling me these are Legion, too? They're just husks of what were once humans! How am I supposed to believe that?! Damn it, DAMN IT! Legion's—it's eating them…
Second Lieutenant:	What did you say?! You still haven't dispatched them here?! Headquarters, do you read me? DO YOU READ ME?!

[1] There has yet to be a distinction between "Red Eye" and "Legions". What is known is that there are many different types of them, and they are not just restricted to a "human" form.

[2] It isn't exactly indicating that the Japanese government is Hamelin, but the guide that comes with the CD says it could be inferred that the Hamelin Organization is a part acting in the stead of the United Nations.

Commander:	What's wrong?
Second Lieutenant:	Hamelin's ordered an aerial bombing of the area!
Commander:	When?
Second Lieutenant:	Right now!
Commander:	They can't… Why? Why is this happening?!
Second Lieutenant:	Stop it—STOP THE ATTACK! WE'RE STILL HERE! Please, help us, HELP—

CD1 / 04: Report #2 (Popola) *Translation by /u/spffn*

PROJECT GESTALT: INFORMATIONAL RELEASE #01035.

The end of a bitter, drawn-out fight; Legion's strength was in decline and what appeared to be a victory for humanity was in clear sight. However, outbreaks of White Chlorination Syndrome remained unabated, and the population continued to dwindle.

In turn, the Hamelin Organization, part of the fight against Legion since 2014, released a number of deeply intriguing reports. The results of their research on a sample extracted from the "Giant" indicated that even if total eradication of White Chlorination Syndrome was not possible, a way to avoid contagion had been found.

This method, referred to as "Gestaltization", involved the separation of a person's soul from their physical body. The process was not without faults, but as no other methods for combating the disease had become available, plans were announced for people across the globe to be made into Gestalts in 2030.



The Stone Flower

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR that includes further insight into NieR. It features illustrations and images, character profiles and concept designs, story digest with screen caps, play-by-play guides, weapons, 10 short stories, and more.

This English version was brought to you by FFTranslations.

The hope of humanity and the despair of the sacrifice.
Red flowers blossom within her two pierced eyes.

The dreams she had at nap time were always warm and bright. Running about on the lawn, holding a kitten on her lap. Her father's back, the treats baked by her mother, the row of planters in the greenhouse... The dreams she had at night were different from her dreams at dawn. How strange, thought Halua each time she awoke in the brightness of midafternoon. Everything she forgot while she was awake, she saw in her dreams. To see them so clearly, even though they were all gone...

Her mother and father died in an accident. The kitten might be alive still, but it would have stopped being a "kitten" long ago. Two years had passed since then. She was sure another family would be living in the house with the greenhouse by now. All she had left was Emil, who had played tag with her on the lawn. Her little twin brother was the only one who had always been with her since she was born - the whole of the past ten years.

"Are you awake, Halua?"

"Sensei..."

The bright, warm memories vanished without a trace.
She could no longer even remember what she had been dreaming about.

"You're covered in sweat. Perhaps it would be a good idea to change into your summer clothes soon."

Sensei took a handkerchief from her pocket and used it to wipe the sweat from Halua's forehead and neck.
Then she awoke Emil, sleeping beside her.

"You wake up too, Emil. It's snack time."

"What is it today, Sensei?"

Again? she thought, to the response of biscuits and cocoa. Biscuits, rice crackers, sponge cake: these were the only three treats they were ever given. This was a "facility", after all, and she had no mother to make different snacks for her each day anymore. Halua knew it was wrong to even ask. But children enjoy snacks, so whatever they were given, as long as they were called "sweets" they would be happy, the adults thought. She was left with no choice but to pretend that she was the same way.

Emil, unlike Halua, was a "childish child". Today, as usual, he happily arranged alphabet-shaped biscuits on his plate and struggled over which to eat first, before finally putting one in his mouth. The biscuits weren't particularly tasty, but as she watched Emil eat, she wondered if maybe they tasted as good as the ones her mother used to make. Somehow frustrated, Halua tried saying something sisterly-sounding.

"Don't play with your food."

"But..."

"You've got the spelling wrong, too. You're missing an 'e' here."

At the facility, Halua and Emil weren't taught in their native language. The language here was Japanese. The last time Halua and Emil had been taught in their mother tongue was more than two years ago. It was only natural for Emil to forget how to spell things.

"Look, this is how you spell it."

Halua took an 'e'-shaped biscuit from her plate and moved it to Emil's. Right away, Emil smiled broadly.

"You're such a great big sister, Halua."

Sensei, holding a cup of coffee, smiled. At snack time she always sat at the same table as Halua and Emil, drinking coffee and talking to them. When she was at the facility, they would eat meals together, too. Sometimes she would read books to them in bed at night, and in the morning, she would always come and wake them. She was just like a real mother.

"I'm an only child, so I'm really jealous of you two."

Was it true? Did she really think that? They hadn't left the facility even once, spending each boring day there. They had lived this way for two years. What about it was there to be jealous of? Most of all, nothing about the facility was normal. Halua, who loved books, knew what kind of place orphanages, which took in children without parents, were. Lots of children in a school-like building, several beds to a room, tens of them eating simultaneously in a big dining room...

She had been in a room with six others when she had first been admitted. There were lots of children who looked to be the same age as her. They ate their meals in a big dining room, too. Maybe that's what you would call a normal orphanage. One by one, the children she shared a room with disappeared, a steady stream of new children entering, which didn't seem quite normal. Finally, since Halua and Emil spoke a different language to the other children, they were moved to this place and given their own room. Thinking about it now, that seemed strange, too. It wasn't like Halua and Emil spoke no Japanese at all. Since they had been moved here, they had had lessons each day, but they were conducted in Japanese. The very lessons themselves were suspicious. They weren't the kind you would have in school. All they did was answer questions in front of a machine. It was more like a test than a lesson. Sometimes, the "lessons" seemed more like playing around. Those were like games rather than tests.

Something was strange about the place. They rarely saw any children besides themselves. The only other people in the building were adults wearing white outfits like Sensei.

"What's wrong?"

Sensei looked at Halua, who had suddenly stood up, with worried eyes. She ran behind Sensei, burying her face in her back.

"Mother..."

She felt faint laughter. Sensei slid out of the chair and turned around, embracing Halua.

"You're so spoiled, Halua."

The hand that stroked her hair was gentle. It was a little like her real mother's.

"That's not fair! Me too!"

She heard Emil stand up, and a voice saying "alright, alright" with a laugh.

Hey, Sensei. Are you on our side? Can I believe that you're different from the other adults?
Her carefully-ironed white coat smelled faintly of chemicals. My mother never smelled like this, Halua thought. Was it because of this smell that she couldn't fully trust her? Or maybe it was because Sensei really thought the same things as all the other adults.

"Do you love me?"

"Yes. I love you, Halua. You too, Emil."

Then be on our side. Don't betray us... Protect me. Halua repeated this over and over in her head as she pressed her cheek tightly against the white coat-wearing chest. After her nighttime temperature measurement, and having just a chapter of a book read to her, it was time to sleep. Another long, boring day had come to an end. Despite each day being like this, Emil was always smiling. He counted the clouds that drifted past outside the window, banged randomly on the keys of the piano in the corner of the room, and drew the same picture over and over on drawing paper. Emil had not a single doubt that this wasn't an orphanage you would find in stories, where something bad was happening.

For Halua, this was simultaneously relieving and a source of worry. She wanted Emil to smile. But she couldn't help but worry about how defenseless he was, so Halua thought she had to be cautious enough for both of them, vigilant towards everything. What "lessons" they'd had that day, what they had eaten and drunk, what kind of

adults they met, what they spoke about. She wanted to write these things down so she wouldn't forget, but she couldn't. They were probably under surveillance. When they had only just arrived there, she had intentionally pretended that her left eye hurt. When she was alone in her room, she would frown and press on her left eye. She kept this a secret from both Emil and Sensei, of course.

The following day, her eye was closely examined, even though she only did what she did when she was all alone.

"Are you awake, Emil?"

"Huuuh?" responded a sleepy voice. She softly reached out and touched Emil's hand.

When they were moved to this building, she was supposed to have been put in a separate room to Emil. She had insisted that they couldn't sleep if they weren't together. After spending the whole evening crying, they were finally allowed to share a bed.

(Be careful. Don't trust the adults.)

She couldn't say it aloud. She was sure someone was listening. But she wished hard as she gripped his hand. She dearly wished she had the ability to convey her thoughts to him just by thinking them.
That day, she had a bad feeling that began in the morning. Something felt very wrong.
When Sensei had said that instead of their morning lesson, they would be undergoing a physical examination, the feeling turned to conviction. Nothing good came after an examination. When she thought about it, when she had been in the first building, several children always vanished after having a "health check". It was after an exam that they had been moved here. Perhaps they were held in order to ascertain the optimal time to move the children somewhere. They might be moved to yet another building. They would be separated from Sensei.

"What's wrong, Halua? Are you feeling ill?"

Coming back to herself, she was standing before Sensei, who looked at her with worried eyes. The hand that touched her forehead to check for fever was so comforting she could almost have cried.

"Sensei, I..."

I don't want to move again. I don't want anything done to me. But she couldn't say it. There was a part of her that couldn't trust Sensei after all. She could call her "Mother" and be pampered by her, but deep down she couldn't rely on her. Halua marveled at how Emil wasn't upset about the exam. Having blood drawn was fine. It hurt a little, but she knew right away what they were doing. But when they attached cold, sucker-like things across her body and connected her to unfamiliar machines, she found it hard to bear. Like when they put her inside a box made of machines. She wanted to tear out the cords from the suckers and run away. Just when she thought she couldn't take anymore the exam would finally end, and one of the adults would tell her she could go back to her room.

Today was different. After removing the suckers and cords attached to her body, they told her to go into the next room to change into her exam clothes. Besides that, Emil, who should have been in the same room, was gone. Anxious, she began to sob, and a woman in white opened the door as though to hurry her. She was an unpleasant-looking woman who both did and didn't resemble Sensei. The adjacent room was large and empty. Strange patterns were drawn on the walls and floor, and a large chair stood all alone in the center of the room. A crowd of adults in white coats stood around the chair. One of them told her to sit. Before she could answer, another adult made Halua sit down. The chair was metal and cold.

"Don't get worked up. We discovered during the exam that you have a serious illness."

The voice was gentle, but she didn't know which of the adults was speaking. At some point, she had been blindfolded. She tried to tear it off, but her hands and feet were bound.

"If you don't undergo surgery to remove it immediately, your life is in danger."

It's a lie, she thought. Nothing is wrong with me. Nothing hurts, and I don't have a fever. My stomach is fine, and I don't have a cough.

"Emil! Where are you!?"

"We mustn't allow the infection to spread, so Emil has gone back to his room.
There's no need to worry."

That's not what I'm worried about. I must get Emil out of here, fast!

She called Emil's name frantically but quickly fell into despair. Her mouth was covered, and however hard she shouted no one would hear... She could smell antiseptic. There was a cold sensation, and then her arm prickled with pain. She had been injected with something. When her surprised cry ceased, she heard a snippet of the adults' conversation.

"This must be the sixth now. We can't scrap any more specimens..."

"No. We'll succeed with this one."

"If she has even a little self-awareness left, that alone should..."

What were they talking about? What did they mean by "the sixth"? What did "if something is left" mean?

"Even if we fail, she has a brother, right? A direct relative should have the aptitude."

She could feel the blood turn to ice in her veins. They were going to kill her. Emil, too.

(Help, Sensei. Save Emil!)

The scream failed to materialize, and all that came was darkness. Halua heard a voice calling her name. It was neither her mother or her father. It wasn't Sensei, either. Who could it be? Emil only ever called her "Sister". Oh, right. One of the adults was calling her. She was fed up with lessons. Maybe it wouldn't be as bad as a physical examination, though. Wait... hadn't she just had one of those?
Yes, when she tried to go back to her room afterward... No, she hadn't gone back? She hadn't been able to!

In a second, her memories rewound. Halua shot up. She looked around her. It was that room. The one with the strange pattern on the walls and floor... But something was strange.

"Halua. Do you understand me?"

She turned in the direction the voice had come from. No one was there.

"Over here."

The voice came from a different direction this time. She turned again, but still, no one was there. It seemed like she could only hear their voices. That was when she realized why she had felt that something was strange.

"Wonderful! It was a success."

Ignoring the voices, Halua looked down at her feet. The floor was so far away. Of course - this whole time, she had seemed so high up that it bothered her immensely. It was like she had been put on something tall, but she had a strange feeling, knowing that wasn't the case. The legs looked just like the bones of a skeleton she'd seen in an illustrated encyclopedia, as did the arms, their color reminiscent of that of a rotten tree. Something was wrapped around her torso, and she could barely see it.
What's... what's this? She tried to remove the thing wrapped around her, but it was too tight. The arm... moved? Slowly, she tried raising the hand. She found she could move it at will. She spread the handout and moved the fingers. The thumb, index finger, middle finger...
Could... could it be?

The strange voice continued, saying things like "Experimental Weapon #6" and "the hope of mankind", but she didn't care. She tried to stand. She couldn't move. That was when she understood that the thing wrapped around her was her own body. No! No! This isn't my body! Halua struggled. She wanted to run away; to get out of here. To get away from this body. She flailed her legs helplessly.

The disembodied voice changed into a soothing tone.

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! She hammered on the wall with all her strength. Stop that, she heard a panicked voice say, but she had no intention of obeying. She banged on the wall again. Feeling a heavy reaction throughout her arms, along with a dull pain, she finally understood. This... is my body. These monstrous arms and legs belong to me. Timidly, she put her hand on her face. It certainly didn't feel like that of a human. In fact, she didn't even know if it was a face. All she knew was that she was no longer human.
I'll never be able to see Emil again. If he sees me like this, he'll get scared and run away, no doubt about it. Emil is such a scaredy-cat. Thinking of Emil, she remembered something else: the words, "Even if we fail, she has a brother, right? A direct relative should have the aptitude."

The adults in white coats had also said, "This is the sixth." The voice before had said "Experimental Weapon #6". That meant that five other children had previously been made to look like this. Maybe the children in the building she had first been put into had gradually vanished because they were used as subjects for these kinds

of human experimentation. Out of them, only the children with "aptitude" for becoming experimental weapons were chosen and moved to another building. It appears Halua was the first "success". That meant that they had established a procedure by which to create them. And her twin brother, Emil, had the same aptitude...

She thought of Emil's face. His innocent, unsuspecting smile. She had to save him. This thought turned into a brutal force. Tearing off her restraints, Halua stood. She kicked the door in the corner of the room. First, she had to get out of there, but with her body, she would never fit through a door made for humans. She tore down both the door and the wall. An alarm began to sound. Shutter-like metal boards covered the walls. Hurriedly Halua tried to stop them with her hand, but something like an invisible force pushed it away.
Thinking about it, she was a "weapon". She was a monster with power so dangerous that just by hitting the wall she had sent cracks running through it; just by kicking it she had destroyed a solid door. No one would be stupid enough to let something like that run wild. Wild beasts are chained up and kept in cages. These metal boards are probably part of some kind of special system.
Something that even an "Experimental Weapon" can't destroy.

Suddenly, the room was plunged into darkness. The lights had been turned off. The alarm ceased, and all was silent. She had been shut in. They had stopped the alarm because they had decided that Halua couldn't get out. She tried touching the wall again. It looked like blue fireworks had been set off in the darkness. Halua's body took the full force of the power pushing her back. I won't give in. I'm going to protect Emil. I can't give in!
Her arms, legs, her whole body creaked, intense pain shooting through her.
Her vision went white. Something swelled and exploded.

Suddenly, her body became light. The repellent force vanished, and her limbs were freed. It was neither pitch black nor bright white. Halua stood in completely normal brightness. A shrill alarm bell rang out, bringing her back to her senses. The wall was crumbling. She went outside, but no one tried to block her path. They probably hadn't expected Halua would escape from the room. Maybe they hadn't even imagined that she would break free of her restraints. She recalled the panicked voice commanding her to stop. Shutters had been placed where the corridor began, but compared to the wall they were like paper. Halua kicked through them with ease and proceeded onward. I have to destroy it - everything in this facility. I won't let them make Emil into a monster. I must get rid of everything related to experimental weapons.

A brutal force welled up inside her. Letting it out, it turned into a blade that cut up all around her. Glaring at the wall blocking her path, it burned down in a mass of flames. Just by wishing it, she could destroy things in all kinds of interesting ways. Now that she could no longer be called "human", she reasoned, she had obtained inhuman powers. Were the adults trying to use this power to fight something? Had they thought they could use obedient children since it was convenient for them? The adults in white coats fled in a panic amidst the rubble and clouds of dust. She couldn't let a single one escape. Halua grabbed the ones closest to her and squeezed. Like ripened fruit, they were crushed limply in her hand, without leaving a trace.
Where is Emil? What about Sensei? Maybe she took Emil and fled.
No, Sensei wouldn't have done that. She knew what was going on here; knew that the siblings were being raised so they could be turned into monsters. After all, she was one of the adults, too. She had been nothing more than their kind keeper.

At some point, she appeared before her. Wearing the same white coat as always, she stood there looking up at Halua. I wanted to trust her. I was so happy when she told me she loved me. I loved listening to her voice when she read to me. Sensei's lips moved. She seemed to be calling out to Halua and saying that she was sorry.
I can't forgive you! She was so angry she almost lost control of herself. Her heart tugged as it would burst. Something was trying to blot her out...

With all her strength, she mowed down what was before her. A white coat shot straight at the wall, stained red. Liar! I hate you! Halua sobbed and screamed. Neither tears nor sound came out. And still, she cried. Still, she screamed. As she did so, she saw herself reflected in tempered glass. Her face, round with red eyes, was that of a monster. But strangely, she didn't feel sad. If anything, it seemed comical. That wasn't why she was sad, why she was crying...

Run, Emil! Go somewhere far away from here, somewhere with no adults in white and no Sensei, no one.

How long had passed? It felt like days, and yet only a moment. Everything on the facility's premises had been reduced to a pile of rubble. Would destroying this be enough? She hoped so.

"Sister?"

She wondered if she was hearing things. No one would call a monster like this their sister. She turned. It was Emil, without a doubt. Wearing a somehow sorrowful expression, he reached out his hand. Forgetting how she looked, Halua rushed over to him. We have to get out of here, Emil, right now. Let's go somewhere far away together. She wanted to run to him, but her legs wouldn't move. They had begun turning to stone. It wasn't just her legs, either - her entire body was petrifying.

Naturally, at this point, if she felt like it, she could quite easily release herself from the petrification. She knew this. It wouldn't take much. But...

"Sister, I..."

Emil had been turned into a weapon, just like her. He looked the same, but he had been given terrible eyes that would turn whatever he looked at to stone. I couldn't protect you. I wanted to, but...



Something tugged at her heart again, and she felt it being blotted out. Was it anger? Sadness?

"I'm sorry."

It's fine now. Halua smiled. Her face had already turned to stone, and she didn't even know if she could smile with that face. But her human mind was vanishing. She knew that.

"Your magic is too powerful, so...
they said you have to be sealed away because it's too dangerous. I'm so sorry."

Just looking at Emil's face, on the verge of tears, hurt. Please. Petrify me more. If you don't, I'll get straight out. Don't let me wake up again... What colors would she dream in when she turned to stone?
Emil's voice calling to her grew faint. Halua simply gave herself up to a cold sleep.

YOKO FACT 4 - https://nier.fandom.com/wiki/Emil's_Mansion

The gameplay sequence in Emil's Mansion in NieR is a homage to Resident Evil. The camera system, the keys necessary to open doors, even the layout is very similar to the Spencer Manor, along with the hidden lab where experiments were being performed on people.

The developers pushed the idea themselves; a good portion of the team had worked on Resident Evil and Resident: Dead Aim.

Also, neither Emil nor the butler are human, and they won't age. So, to reflect time standing still, I gave the mansion a monochrome color palette.

Lastly, the keycards found in the underground facility are AA, KA, SA, TA, NA, GA, MA, YA, RA, WA. This sequence corresponds to the first column of the Gojūon, a grid traditionally used to order the kanas (the Japanese syllabaries).

CD1 / 05: Politicians

Translation by /u/spffn

Man A: I'm very busy, so give us the shorthand version.
I've got to attend a banquet with my election committee after this, you see—

Man B: You're out reveling with your "election committee" in a time like this? Cancel it.

Man A: That's easy for you to say. The governor of Kanagawa has just released several new regulations.
It's absolutely all a publicity stunt, and won't have a single effect on our current state of affairs.

Man C: Even our party has to come up with some kind of plan to make up for it. But it seems that as long as you've got something to brag about, you've got the people on your side. A scapegoat.

Man B: So that's what this is about. No matter, let's start with the short version. Today we received a demand from the United Nations about their participation in Project Gestalt.

Man A: "Project Gestalt"? Oh, you mean that plan that's more trouble than it'll ever be worth.

Man B: Essentially, our remaining experts' testimonies no longer need to be presented.
It seems the international community as a whole is pressing for the expediency of the project on a large scale.

Man C: And we're to pay for this?

Man B: Yes. As the country from which White Chlorination Syndrome originated, they've requested that most of the burden fall on us.

Man A: But White Chlorination Syndrome has already been confirmed by scientists as a disease obviously not native to Japan.

Man B: Our neighbors don't seem to believe that, though, do they? However, the American-Soviet Co-op has indicated that their willingness to handle the promotion of Project Gestalt.

Man C: In other words, if we pay for Project Gestalt, the Americans guarantee to silence all these reparation requests for us?

Man A: We'll be paying for this one way or another. Not to mention that explaining this to the public will prove to be rather annoying, as well.

Man C: Can we even get our citizens to agree to such an unreliable procedure to begin with?

Man B: The people's approval is not the issue here! Right now, this is a matter of whether we live or die and—

Man A: In half a year, the lower house elections will be upon us. If we aren't careful, this could be a double-edged sword for our party.

Man B: And for the public too, I'd say... A discussion on who gets to live, huh...



And Then There Were None

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It is the background story for Grimoire Weiss, Grimoire Rubrum and Grimoire Noir.

This English version was brought to you by RaizinMonk.

The flute of Hamelin resounds, and the curtains are drawn.
A holy stage that decides the life or death of humankind.

I was in a room without windows or even a door. It was a huge room. There was no lamp to be found, but it was bright. The entire ceiling seemed to function as the light source. Around me were people around my age. At first sight, their races seemed to be completely random. Me included there, were nine males, and the remaining four were females. Some were still unconscious, and others were already standing with their guard up. And for some reason, each of us had a book lying by their side. What happened? Why am I here? I felt dizzy, maybe due to being drugged to sleep. At times like this, it is best to not stand up too quickly. As I identified the situation around me, I reached for my gun. However, as I expected, it was gone.

Waking up in an unmistakably kidnapped state, I knew fire weapons and the like would be confiscated. It is only natural. However, even the wire that was sewed in the hem of my clothing and the explosives hidden in my shoe soles were gone. All of them, without exception. That is when I realized. I was captured by the very organization I worked for. I had a feeling this would happen. It came to me when I was told about this shady "top-secret mission". Moreover, they told me it was not an order. I was free to accept the mission or not, they said.

Not only would I be presented with huge compensation, but they even promised to let me retire from service after the mission. In other words, they told me I could say goodbye to this rotten life of mine. You would truly be an utter fool to refuse an offer like this. Or a homicidal maniac, I guess. Of course, when they were willing to go this far, it couldn't be a decent mission. Perhaps ninety-nine out of a hundred – no – nine hundred ninety-nine out of a thousand would not return alive, or something. They were most likely able to give such offers because, from the beginning, they did not intend to pay anything. Of course, I knew as much. Despite knowing all along, I'm still here in this mess. Failing to remember, I sneered at myself.

Then, someone called to me from the side. It was a young man presumably younger than me, but unfortunately, he was not from the same country. I silently shook my head. He probably understood the situation too, as he didn't talk to me since. People from all kinds of countries work for my organization. Most of us only understand our mother tongues. When our age finally hits the second digit, we are forced a life of military training from dusk to dawn. We don't get a proper education or anything. We can't read or write our own language, let alone learn other languages. Of course, there are also those that are born from parents from different countries, and being raised abroad from a young age have learned multiple languages, but they are but a minority. I also tried to greet the guy on the opposite side of me in my mother tongue, but he too silently shook his head.

At that time the girl right in front of me raised her head. It seemed she finally got to her senses. Resistance to drugs is different per person, but people like her are the ones that usually die first. Being slower than others can kill you. As soon as our eyes met, her face filled with surprise. Does she know me? Who is she? Wait, I think I have seen her somewhere too. The lass stood up. As expected, that must have made her dizzy, and with a grand sound, she tumbled down.

At the sight of her clumsiness I remembered. "So, you are still alive, huh..."

Raising her upper body, she nodded. The lass knew a small number of languages, and I heard her mother came from my country. Children naturally learn the language that their mother speaks. "How good! You are alive too!"

"Of course I am! Don't put me in the same category as you."

I met her three years ago. We were both survivors of the thirteenth crusade, a large-scale Legion mop-up operation. Of course, we were in different units, but once the operation starts what unit you are in doesn't matter shit. All battlefields are like that, but this one was even worse than usual. At the time I was sixteen, and already a senior soldier, but even I knew my chances of survival were only about fifty-fifty despite that. During the melee, I found an idiot that stood stock still in front of the Legions. In an instant, I knocked her down before our surroundings were reduced to ashes. It wasn't an act of mercy or anything that admirable. We soldiers are valuable goods. That's why we save our comrades. Or rather, we don't waste them. That's the regulation.

To my surprise, the idiot was my age. So, she was suddenly thrown into the battlefield without even having received any proper training. It's no surprise she lost her head seeing the Legions from up close. The Legions bear the resemblance of human beings. They were once human after all. Many infected with the White Chlorination Syndrome face death, but some survive. By turning into rabid monsters, that is. The urgency of exterminating the Legions is not simply because they attack humans. The Legions are a huge source of infection, creating new patients of the White Chlorination Syndrome. This mysterious disease emerged thirty years ago, and to this day no cure has been found. Maybe it was a disease spread by the white giant that came from another world. Although there is no specific remedy, preventive medicine exists.

The problem is that it is impossible to mass-produce this luciferase medicine. Besides, its effects have only been confirmed among the young. The younger, the higher the efficiency. Thus, children with high physical ability are selected, administered with the valuable luciferase, and assigned to the extermination of the Legions. The international organization that trains and dispatches these children is the Hamelin Organization. The name was taken from a fairytale about a piper that assembles children and leads them away, but in my opinion, it is a name of extremely bad taste.

"So, why are you here anyway?"

"They told about a... top-secret mission"

"High compensation, release from service. You are free to accept or not. Right?"

Her eyes opened in surprise, but she understood immediately and nodded. Until that day three years ago the lass had quite naturally been going to school, so if anything, her learning and comprehensive abilities were higher than mine. "I wonder if everyone in here was offered the same deal."

I took a good look around me again. Maybe we are from all different places because we are brought here with the expectations of our countries on our shoulders. At first sight, it doesn't appear that people besides the girl and I are planning to share their intentions with each other. "People that can refuse it are not here, I think."

She was right. Everyone strongly wished to escape their current lives. What we were doing was murder, genocide, after all. We are told that our opponents are monsters without a shard of intelligence, but first-hand they look unmistakably human. And we incinerate them alive. It is said that the White Chlorination Syndrome is passed on by body fluids like blood and saliva, so by shooting them down, we spread these fluids. Therefore, we are ordered to restrain from firing our guns whenever possible. We don't wish to inhale anything dangerous ourselves, so we don't complain. However, seeing creatures that look just like humans die wrapped in fire is no pretty sight. I incinerated my first Legion when I only just turned ten. Nine years have passed since then, but I still can't get used to it. No matter how many times I see it, it is never pleasant.

"This thing, what do you think it is? It looks like a book, but it cannot open." With a curious face, the lass tried to open the book. The books that were left near each of us were very thick, and the covers, that could either be black or a deep gray, had nothing written on them.

"Hey! Don't touch that so carelessly!"

"Ah..." In her panic, she let go of the book.

"Don't you 'Ah' on me, geesh." I let out a spontaneous sigh. This part of her has not changed one bit over the past three years. Even though it was just for a while, the lass and I worked together after I saved her. I could not afford to leave folks without any battle experience to chance. Luckily, she was a quick learner. With only a few instructions halfway, she managed to keep up with me without delay. Her physical abilities were also formidable. They had to be, otherwise, the lass would not have been selected at the age of sixteen, no matter how high her receptivity to luciferase was. However, when we could no longer avoid being split up, I thought she would die. After the operation ended, we had no means of contacting each other.

“Good job surviving that. You sure have good luck.”

She violently shook her head in denial. “Because you... let me escape”

“That’s not true. It was an error of judgment on my side."

We split up because we were surrounded by Legions. If we would run in opposite directions at least one of us would be able to run away. That’s the kind of numbers and disposition the enemy had. I obviously have higher chances of survival and more value in combat. So, if I have to make a choice between me and her, I should be the one going down the safer route. Yet I chose the impossible option. I must have been possessed. That’s why I was filled with a feeling of discomfort as I remembered. I felt irritated. Until this very day, I have taken effort not to remember... When she opened her mouth, wanting to say something in return, we heard a quarrel from a corner of the room. It was a guy and a girl. I thought they must have happened to understand each other, like us, but that did not seem to be the case. I don’t know what the reason was, but it must have been a trivial matter. They were cursing at each other without understanding what the other said. Soon the girl slapped the guy. It sounded painful, yet no one tried to intervene. But I could not blame them. Each and every one of us has received enough training to fight off a Legion barehanded. If you were to step in, you would have to prepare for the possible consequences.

The young man’s face turned red, and he grabbed for the girl. At that moment we witnessed something unbelievable. Suddenly the book at the feet of the girl opened. Even though she didn’t touch it, or kick it with her foot by accident. From the opened book, suddenly a black hand emerged. The hand quickly enlarged to gigantic proportions and grabbed the young man, raising him in the air. With an astonished expression on his face, he was crushed to death. The girl was dumbfounded too. Apparently, even she didn’t know what was happening. But it did not end there. The book that belonged to the young man started emitting a strong light. I thought another black hand would appear, but I was wrong. His body was sucked into the book, not to be seen again. Along with the young man’s body, the light from the book also disappeared. Then the cover’s blackish color turned into aquamarine, and a pattern formed on it. It was an eerie pattern that resembled a human face.

The silence did not last long. In an instant, the entire room raised an uproar.

“What... was that?”

“How should I know? Don’t ask me.”

I reached out my hand for the book that was lying next to me. Until now I thought it would be best not to touch it carelessly, but the situation had changed. I now had to obtain as much information about these books as I could. Not only were there no letters or illustrations on the cover, but it also didn’t even have a single scratch. I had a feeling the material was different from mere paper. And as the lass said, the pages were completely stuck together, as if they were glued shut.

“How did that girl open her book?”

At that moment, as if to answer, or rather, to ridicule my question, voices started flowing into the room. The many voices were all speaking simultaneously, so it was hard to make out what they said.

I listened with all my might because I heard words that I thought to be my language. There were probably thirteen voices flowing in at once so that everyone in the room could understand. The voices relayed information that was quite important, yet it was not helpful at all. The books each of us were given were “grimoires” – books of magic. We should use them to kill each other. Only two of us were to survive.

The explanation, short as it was, was repeated, without clarifying the exact reason or goal.

“Top-secret mission my ass, deceiving me like that,” I spat out, as I cautiously looked around. In this room, without windows or doors, there was no place to run. If I wanted to get out alive, I had no choice but to fight.

If everyone in this room were to go all out on killing each other, it would be hard to even leave two alive. Just having one person survive would be pushing it, and if we are not careful, everyone will die. However, I have to avoid being the first at the very least.

The girl that conjured the black hand reached for her book once more, but the guy next to her was faster. The guy raised her by her neck and wrung it. With a dull sound, her limbs lost their strength. One down. I guessed the next victim would be the guy that killed the girl. Anyone becomes defenseless at the very moment they take down their prey, so obviously, his back was already targeted. Two people charged at him at once, but not because

they conspired. They simply both judged in an instant that this was the most effective action to take. However, the two of them did not kill their target. The moment the girl's body disappeared in her book; the guy that seemed to be the victor fell to the ground with anguish on his face. Lying motionless on the ground, he, too, was swallowed by his book, and the two books were all that remained. Their covers turned into a green color like jade, and the other amber, both of them forming a peculiar face pattern.

"Use the magic book...," the lass muttered with a slight tremble in her voice.

The girl that conjured the black hand from her book to kill the guy was acknowledged as the victor because she used this "grimoire", but the guy that killed her with bare hands was not regarded as such.

"So that's how it works. Got it." In this situation, avoiding to be the first to go down is the right answer. That's why I did not move and gestured the lass with my eyes to do the same. Now the rules of the game were clear, and I finally had a grasp on the situation.

"But now the problem is, we have no clue how to use this thing."

Don't laugh. How the hell do you want me to use something as insane as magic? I felt a little grin form on my lips, even though it's not even funny. I just realized I was heavily shaken. Even when I first faced the Legions, I had not felt this disturbed. I just had to do as I was taught in training. Even in unexpected situations, there is always a way out. Because I knew that, I was able to keep my cool. But what do I do here? It's nothing like in training, and I don't know if there is any way out. On top of that, three people died right in front of my eyes. In rapid succession. It's all because of those damn books! I tried to smash the book on the ground with all my might when somebody grabbed my arm.

"I am happy that there will be two survivors, not one. We can get away with not killing each other. We both can survive. We are lucky."

I wondered if luck was the right word in this situation. But she smiled at me. Not like the faint smile that I made from losing my mind, but one I could tell came sincerely.

"Calm. Everyone else is alone, but there are two of us. When thinking with two heads, we can find the solution faster than all the others." She was probably right. In here, having someone to communicate your intentions with can be a most powerful weapon.

"Just pointing out, I'm not the brightest out there."

"I know," she snickered. The lass hit the cover of her book with her hand, and then she examined the book with an earnest look on her face.

"That person, she was angry. And was almost killed. The black hand is connected to one of those..." Or maybe you have to meet both requirements to use this 'grimoire' thing. Nonetheless, if we had to be on the verge of death to activate this thing, it would not make things easy. Maybe they told us to kill each other to clear this very requirement.

"Oh, or maybe..." She raised her head as if realizing something when suddenly the expression on her face froze. What's wrong¸ I thought, but I failed to exclaim the question. I thought I saw her stretch out her arms at me. When I felt something hit my back, I realized she had knocked me down. In tilted perspective, I saw a gigantic black lance had penetrated the lass's body. All sounds faded away. She must have seen the black hand from over my shoulder. That's why she suddenly knocked me down. Maybe to return the favor from three years ago, or maybe she...

A book nearby started shining. I rushed to her side. At this rate, she was going to be sucked up by the book. I held her in my arms and strongly grasped her hand. Don't disappear! Please don't disappear! Her lips moved. What is it? What do you want to say? But I could not understand her language. Come to think of it, I did not even know her name. Because we had never expected to live to see each other again, neither of us had given their name. Suddenly, the heft escaped from my arms, and the hand I held tight seemed to slip out of my grasp as it disappeared.

All that remained of her was a book with a red cover. It was a deep crimson, like the color of blood. The face that formed on it did not bear the slightest resemblance to hers.

Everything went white before my eyes. I cried it out. Merely cried it out. Countless letters I had never seen before appeared, blocking my vision. Yet I kept screaming. Suddenly, the faded sound came back. I heard screaming. And several groaning voices. Many pointed spears were protruding from the floor. With a blank look, I gazed how everyone in the room was skewered in a single instant. Due to the strange letters in my sight, I had long lost my sense of reality.

Before long, however, my vision returned to normal. A young man was standing on the other side of the room. A triumphant grin formed on his lips, with his book in his hand. This was the guy that summoned the spears from the ground. Apparently, the letters had protected me from trouble. I survived. But the thought didn't make me happy at all. I had no desire whatsoever to laugh in triumph like the guy in front of me, but on the other hand, I did not feel like mourning over the dead either. Frankly, I did not care one bit.

Then, I saw something shining in the corner of my eye. The book. My book started emitting light, even though I had won the fight! The other guy shouted something in a bewildered tone. I guessed he was complaining about how they deceived him by telling the final two to remain would be able to get out of here. Actually, the voices had said "Only two of you are to survive," but they had not said anything about letting us out. I had a feeling this would happen. The higher-ups in our organization were not a pleasant bunch.

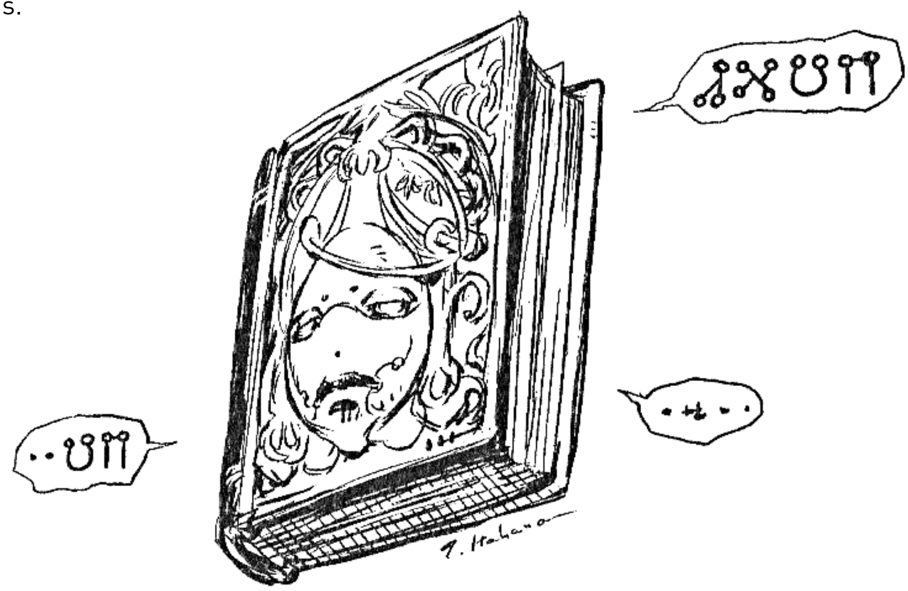
After all, luciferase being a preventive medicine was a downright lie. Even though it can delay the onset of the disease, it cannot prevent infection. I first got wind of the rumor a little while ago. We were deceived and simply used to suit their convenience. We were given medicine without preventive effects and thrown in the midst of a huge source of White Chlorination Syndrome infection. The children led away by the piper are all doomed to fall ill and die, eventually. Or they turn into monsters, to be killed by their comrades. The situation in this room is probably a human experiment too. From the moment we were collected here, our fates had been sealed.

The guy's shouting had stopped, and I saw a face form on the now pitch-black book. Just like the lass, it did not bear the slightest resemblance to his original face. However, I'm not sure whether you could say I "saw" it, as my body was already sucked into the book. I cannot see the color of my own cover, though...

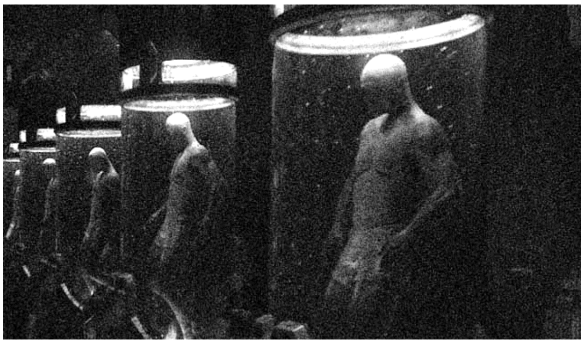
Ah, I see. White. The white book – Grimoire Weiss.
What a ridiculous name. I can't hold my laugh.

So, from now on a new farce begins.
Now that we are given new faces,
what roles are we to perform?

I just kept on laughing



2025



January: The first "Replicants" are created - vessels based on the genetic information of a person undergoing Gestalt conversion. These shells provide the solution to the dilemma of a Gestaltized soul losing its physical body. The first Replicant experiment in which a Gestalt is removed from its original body and then integrated with its corresponding Replicant vessel succeeds.

The techniques of "Replicantization" is integrated into a newly expanded Project Gestalt...

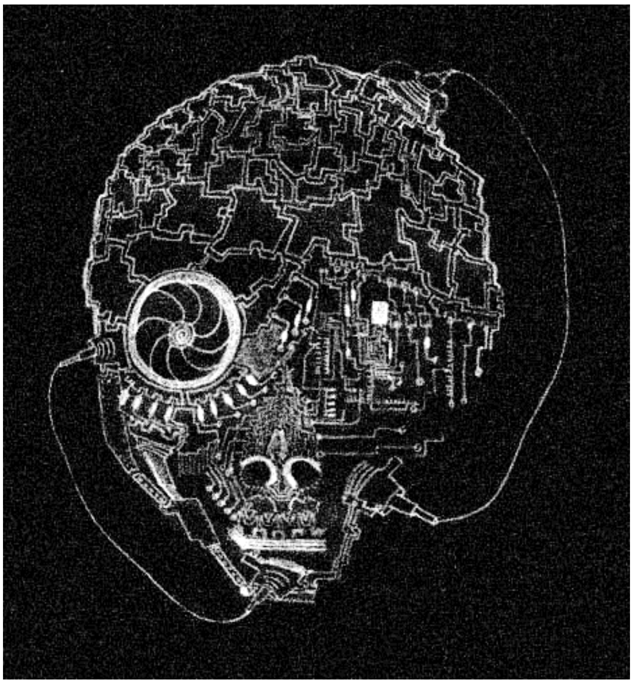
2026

June: A catastrophic accident occurs at the National Weapons Research Laboratory in which control of Experiment "Number 6" is lost. An emergency plan to seal away "Number 6" utilizing experiment "Number 7" is put into action soon thereafter. Project oversight deems experimentation with Maso on humans' dangers outweigh the benefits and the scope of the research is scaled back dramatically.

2030

Red Eye, the leader of the Legion, is slain in Jerusalem by the leader of the Hamelin Organization's 13th Crusade unit. The CO dealing the killing blow in the battle is mortally wounded during the conflict and succumbs to injuries soon afterward.
With the defeat of the Red Eye commander, the Legion is no longer able to coordinate unified attacks. The physical threat of the Legion has come to an end. However, White Chlorination Syndrome continues to spread rapidly across the planet...

2032



February: With the threat of WCS spiraling out of control and no cure in sight, the twin processes of Gestaltization and Replicantization are revealed to the public. Wealthy upper-class citizens are the first to enter the program.

March: People all over the world undergo Gestaltization, with their corresponding Replicants also being created. Due to the high costs involved with the process, the rich segments of society are initially given preference to the Gestalt conversion. The Gestalts created are put to sleep until a time the world recovers from the global pandemic. The Replicant System, which can continue this process of Replicant production as long as necessary, is created at this time. Androids, which can operate indefinitely, are placed in strategic points throughout the world as overseers of the Replicants' activities and charged with the maintenance of the system.

The Replicants created from Project Gestalt are engineered with immunity to White Chlorination Syndrome and given minimal sentience to follow basic commands by the android overseers. They are tasked with exterminating the remaining Legion roaming the world and gathering the illness causing Maso. The collected Maso particles are returned to a "Celebrant Android", which in turn conducts a ceremony to transfer the foreign element to the parallel world from which it originated.

2033

The Grimoire Project is devised - Using the multiple-origin technology, it becomes possible to embed a Gestalt into a book-like vessel. Thirteen "sealed books", beginning with Grimoire Noir and Grimoire Weiss, are created. Using the massive amount of energy created from the two Grimoires being activated simultaneously, it is possible to forcefully re-insert Gestalts into their corresponding Replicants at large scale once the Legion and WCS are eradicated from the world.

YOKO FACT 5 - From the Famitsu magazine (No.1120 6/3 2010)

CD1 / 06: Report #3 (Devola)

Translation by /u/spffn

PROJECT GESTALT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS PROVISIONAL REPORT:

Progress on the Research and Development of the Replicant System:

Designed for use in Project Gestalt, the development of the Replicant system is approaching completion. Additionally, the error rate in decoding information from the Gestalt form to Replicant body is being controlled at under 1%, with Replicant consciousnesses confirmed destroyed and suppressed.

As such, we Observers have been dispatched in order to maintain humanities' Replicant forms, to ensure the possibility of their continued existence.

"Relapse" Cases and the Original Gestalt:

The Replicant system requires data from the original human to be input into it, and in short: studying only the resulting Gestalt is showing to be a futile endeavor. After a certain amount of time has passed in Gestalts, there is an over 70% likelihood that restoration as a human becomes impossible, compounded by a failure of the reintegration process with Replicants. These Gestalts—which have lost their original personalities—are known as "relapse" cases, becoming in some ways beings akin to Legion.

According to the newest research from the World Purification Commission, if DNA resistant to relapse exists, then from that a template for stemming the occurrence of relapses could be created. The Gestalt with this DNA was referred to as the "Original Gestalt". A large portion of the UN's budget was focused on locating the Original, yet progress remained stagnant. To keep on the planned schedule, the general population was transitioned into Phase Two.

The Original Replicant:

To find a candidate suitable for impression onto a Replicant, the UN and a number of other nations pressed forward to Phase Two. In hopes of hastening the search, this stage forewent the use of only interested applicants, in favor of making Gestaltization compulsory or by switching to mass recruitment strategies. Within Japan, Phase Two was implemented silently, selecting potential candidates from members of the general public with few or no living blood relatives. From those chosen, final determinations were made by way of a selection exam, the contents of which are part of a separate report. Relevant to this report, selection committee members were pulled from the Ministries of Defense, Health, Labor, Welfare and the Cabinet, as well as temporary appointments from the World Purification Commission to act as aides in progression and completion.

The official documents are regarded as classified and forbidden from being disseminated outside of the department.

Observers Report
Devola & Popola

01/28/2050

CD1 / 07: NieR – Presentiment *Translation by /u/spffn*

※ This is in January 24th, 2050, Yoyogi area.

NieR: Here should be all right… I guess…

(Yonah coughing and the sound of a shovel digging at the ground.)

Yonah: Brother, where did Mom go?

NieR: Mom’s… Mom’s gone far away for a bit.

Yonah: Mm? When’s she coming back…?

NieR: We’ll just have to wait and see.

Yonah: Okay… Hey, what are you burying…?

NieR: It’s… trash. Just some trash, is all.
Yonah, why don’t you go over there where there’s not as much wind?

Yonah: Okay.

NieR: Go get warm, all right?
I have to keep it together… I have to keep it together… have to keep Yonah safe…

Radio Broadcaster: …the road will likely be difficult until its completion.
And up next, the Legion Report: Concerns are being raised surrounding cutbacks to an already increased budget.

(Beeping sound to indicate the start of the program)

While Legion may already be gone, the battle with them and its resulting costs have become the country’s newest issue to grapple with. In response to the potential cutbacks, the Ministry of Defense has announced they will be submitting their decision during this current Diet session. However, there is no intention of making the contents of this decision public. As such, it remains uncertain whether or not tomorrow’s special Diet session will settle the discussion.

(Beeping sound to indicate the end of the program)

Radio Broadcaster: Well then, how about today’s weather? Here’s your host, Ms. Saitou!

Saitou (Lady): Thank you! Today’s another cold one, isn’t it? Due to the day’s strong, dry winds, I’m sure many of you should be making sure your laundry isn’t getting ruined by all the salt getting whipped up into the air! With the coming rain, it’s sure to be difficult—

NieR: I wish I could give you a warmer place to rest but…
I can’t really make it any deeper than this… I’m sorry… I’m so sorry, Mom…

(Yonah starts coughing.)

NieR: Yonah? You okay? Are you cold?

Yonah: I’m a little cold…

NieR: Let’s get back to the shelter.
There’s not going to be much food, but at least it’s warm.

Yonah: Mhm.

(Chimes ring on a passing announcement truck.)

Announcer:	Today's threat level announcement: In the areas of Shinjuku, Shibuya, Nakano, and Setagaya, we are officially currently at Level 2[1]: a preliminary caution alert. As much as possible, please avoid leaving your homes and— (more that gets overshadowed by Yonah and NieR.)
Yonah:	Brother?
NieR:	What do they mean…? Legion is gone.
Announcer:	… I repeat, today's threat level announcement…

CD1 / 08: Kainé – Family *Translation by /u/spffn*

Kaali:	(sighs) Kainé… having a child like you is truly…
Kainé:	My deepest apologies, Grandmother Kaali.
Kaali:	So many distinguished people came to the gala, and you were so preoccupied with that mongrel that you neglected to greet even a single person.
	(Puppy barks.)
Kaali:	What an unsightly animal. If you want a dog, then I'll get you one more suited to our family's image, is that not enough? But that dog… give it to the steward later to dispose of.
Kainé:	Mm—but Grandmother—
Kaali:	Be silent!
	(Kainé begins to play.)
Kaali:	(Sighs again) Child… you just don't understand the graces required of the elite. If you were someone who understands the importance of greetings at a party like that, what do you think you would say in this situation? You don't understand the gravity of all this. That party was the ideal opportunity for you to exemplify the grace with which our family carries itself. If you understand the weight of any of this, then a dog like that—
Grandfather:	(Clear throat) Kaali… isn't that quite enough?
Kaali:	Dear…
Grandfather:	It's not as if Kainé has any ill-intent behind it, now does she? Long before this house was concerned with "grace", what of all the times you were so proud to have such a kindhearted granddaughter?
Kaali:	You are always far too soft on Kainé! Am I the only one who ever thinks of our family? All this time, we've only come across as this upstart military family who's suddenly stepped into the limelight, and you—is that not embarrassing to you?!
Grandfather:	… is that how you see it? Kaali… I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I'll try to take it more into consideration from now.

[1] A level 2 warning is that there is a possibility of Legion, and a level 1 is the possibility of Red Eyes.

(Kaali huffs and walks off.)[2]

Kainé: Grandfather... I'm very sorry.

Grandfather: Oh child, don't worry yourself over it. Your grandmother is really a kind woman. When she fought Legion, it changed her; made her heart a little harder is all. It was... an excruciatingly difficult battle for her. Until just days before, they'd all been human. Your neighbors, your family, your lover... then they all became your savage enemy. People you'd been close with for longer than you could remember... For Kaali, it was utterly heartbreaking...

Kainé: Of course, everyone knows the story of how Grandmother Kaali became the greatest hero of the war. Because of you and Grandmother, we are all able to live safely.

Grandfather: What we did is not worth your praise. Just for us to even survive, we fought so desperately, day in and day out... So Kainé, please forgive your Grandmother.

Kainé: Grandfather! Forgive her? She's done nothing that—

(Puppy barks.)

Grandfather: Oh yes, I built a dog house for you out in the backyard.

Kainé: Grandfather...!

Grandfather: I don't know whether he'll like it or not, though. Ah, was it a boy?

Kainé: (Happily) It's a girl, Grandfather!

Grandfather: Is that so? Then, perhaps we should have it painted pink.

(The phone begins to ring.)

[2] Kaali developed PTSD, so she couldn't control her feelings.

Both Kainé's grandfather and grandmother used to be soldiers back in the day. Kaali was the captain of the 13th crusade, and she defeated the last Red Eye, and thus became the war hero. However, the truth is that while Kaali was indeed in the 13th crusade, she was only the vice-captain, the captain was someone else. So why is it that Kaali is treated as the captain, and where did the original captain go? The truth is kept within the Crusaders' secret archives and was never made public. (Look up the year 2030 on Grimoire timeline.)

CD1 / 09: Emil – Weapon

Translation by /u/spffn

(The sounds of a bustling research lab.)

Receptionist: (Distantly) Yes, this is the National Weapons Research Lab[3].

Chief of Research: (On the phone) Yes… yes, ma'am, that's something we are currently in the process of installing. I understand. Then, to expand its protection capabilities, at the next meeting, please allow us to review the… ah, no, no ma'am! That was not my intention at all, my apologies! At any rate, the proceedings are underway… yes, I understand. Thank you again for your patience with us, my apologies for troubling you. (He hangs up.)

Lab Assistant: Was that Mrs. Kaali again?

Chief: Seriously, the old coot is touched in the head—

Lab Assistant: Chief, you shouldn't talk that way about our clients.

Chief: Well, the family certainly were heroes in the war… but to bring up such an old tale nowadays is so…

Lab Assistant: "Heroes"? You mean that woman was famous in the war?

Chief: Oh, you don't know her? She was the commanding officer of the Crusade responsible for killing the last remaining Red Eye. It seems her husband was a member of the units as well.

Lab Assistant: That's just—they were real war heroes then, huh?

Chief: I suppose. They were paid by the government for their efforts, and with some skilled management of finances over the years, one way or another they've managed to grow quite rich. But recently, much of it has been going to our military research, so she's become something like a patron of our work. After the disaster that No.6 became, the fact that our lab has managed to hang on as long as it has is largely thanks to her house's financial backing.

Lab Assistant: Then, isn't it fair to consider her our benefactor?

Chief: If that's the case, what use does she have in giving money to a weapons research lab like ours? Maybe she's gunning for another war or something…

(A door opens and small, fast footsteps approach.)

Emil: Miss Scientist?

Lab Assistant: What's the matter?

Emil: I've written a new song! I'd really like for you to be the first to listen to it if you want. Can you come now?

Lab Assistant: Well, at the moment I've got something I'm working on, so… how do 30 minutes from now sound? I'll meet you in the piano room.

Emil: Of course! I'll wait for you there then! Please don't forget!

[3] This institution is owned by the government to do research on weapons. It was created in 2018 by the government of Japan as a means to stand against the Hamelin Organization. However, it has been downsizing due to an incident in 2026 when a weapon went out of control.

(Emil hurries back out of the room.)

Chief: No.7...

Lab Assistant: Chief, his proper name is Emil[4].

Chief: You're right... After all, he's our very own benefactor—took all that excess power right out from under No.6 while it was berserk. If we didn't have Emil's power of petrification, the entirety of this branch would have been history.

Lab Assistant: But in exchange for that, he's never going to be able to see our world again.

Chief: (Sighs) But it's amazing, isn't it? We've covered his eyes, but it hasn't stopped him from getting around in the slightest.

Lab Assistant: Absolutely, it's as if he can tell where obstacles are, just by the sounds and movements of the air around him.

Chief: I expected no less. Truly, only a monster cou—

Lab Assistant: (Slamming her hand on the table) Sir.

Chief: A-Ah... sorry.

Lab Assistant: That boy, he hasn't done a single thing wrong, you can't—
(She takes a deep breath to relax). It's horrible.
Using these children as experiments... It's us... we're the real...

Man: (On phone) What? An accident at Hatsudai?
Why do you need assistance from us for that? Hello? Can you hear me?

Lab Assistant: What's going on there...?

Chief: ... It can't be. An accident during the transport?

Lab Assistant: "Transport"? What do you mean, sir?

(The phone begins to ring.)

[4] Emil is a human-based magical weapon that is created by this institution. He will not grow old, and the researcher responsible for him has been providing him with education in the dark, though the chief is simply tolerating it.

CD1 / 10: NieR - Chaos

Translation by /u/spffn

(A phone ringing and people screaming in terror in the background, running from a blast caused by Legion.)

Officer A: (On the phone) I'm telling you! Please, we need you to send reinforcements[5]! We absolutely cannot guide all these people with just three officers!

Officer B: We are now at Level 1 Alert! Please, evacuate the area! Everyone, please remain calm! Remain calm and move swiftly! Proceed towards the area of Yotsuya! Please do not go towards the stations! Please avoid Shinjuku station!

Officer A: (Still on the phone) I said Legion is here! The classification charts?—I can't find it on here! Just looking in front of me though, I've got 1, 2, 3, 4… we've got another 7 bodies! I've got people being attacked!

(Perspective changes to NieR and Yonah fleeing in the panic.)

NieR: Yonah! Over here!

Yonah: (Tiredly) Wait! Brother!

NieR: Legion was supposed to be wiped out—how are they here?!

Yonah: Brother…

NieR: It's okay Yonah, it's all going to be okay, Brother's right here with you!

Man: Ow! Don't shove!

Woman A: (In background) Let go! Let me go!

Woman B: (Answering phone) What? Hello? What did you say? Yotsuya? The police said we could head there, but—there are so many people here, no one can move!

NieR: (Struggling in the crowd) Shit—Yonah! Don't let go of my hand!

(Guns firing in the background)

Officer A: Yes! Yes, sir! S-Sir? "Knocked off the JSDF's military transport…? "
What was? What was knocked off? Damn it, the signals not getting through—
Sir, can you hear me? Sir— (an explosion, and the man starts screaming in pain)
(he coughs painfully) no—that's not, Legion… that's, Red Eye…

Commander: This is Troop #2; we have confirmed visuals of Red Eye. Since 13:50, we have been unable to contact the 3rd company assigned to protect the transport convoy. According to information we acquired from the police, in the middle of a typical operation at Hatsudai, it appears that Specimen B[6] was dropped.
Records indicate it should stand at 8 meters tall, but we've confirmed that the overall height of the current Specimen B is at least 20 meters.

Commander: We believe this is most likely the Kyūshū government's specimen. Requesting permission to activate and call a tank strike—Yes, sir… yes… yes, sir. Presently, we

[5] Ever since the Legions are eradicated in 2033, the report of any Legions goes to local police as the Japanese government sees that any further reports of Legions' appearance are simply a hoax.

[6] At this point in time, there are Specimens A to F. Any information regarding these specimens are considered to be top secret within the army and the government.

are facing opposition and engaging the enemy, but it has been ineffective. What? "Harming Specimen B will not be tolerated?" What do you mean? We're up against Red Eye, there's no way to avoid that! If we don't stop it, we're all going to die!

Yonah: Brother!

NieR: Yonah! Hold on tight!

(Yonah gets swept away by the crowd.)

NieR: Yonah? Yonah!

Yonah: Brother! (farther away) Brother!!

NieR: Shit—please move! That's my sister, she—Yonah! Yonah!!

CD1 / 11: Emil - Suppression *Translation by /u/spffn*

Male Scientist: A guest? I don't think there was an inspection on the schedule for today, but...

Scientist: There are so many people at the entrance, though...

Lab Assistant: Chief, I never heard anything about this transport.

Chief: Because I hadn't told anyone. The plan was to combine the JSDF's forces with our own, and to use a Red Eye specimen they had preserved to develop state-of-the-art weapons. The government's been so concerned with the military's decline in power, they even gave us a grant for it! It's been a secret of the highest priority!

Lab Assistant: And this Red Eye went berserk in the middle of transporting it?

Chief: Well, we don't know all the details yet...

Lab Assistant: Chief... by God, what have you done?

Chief: Do you think I had a choice?! You need money to do research! If Japan wants to ever be able to oppose the Hamelin Organization, this is the only thing I could have done!

(Men burst into the room with guns.)

Chief: Who are you?

Intruder: Stay where you are! Move and we shoot.

(Yura Masayoshi[7] walks in.)

Yura: Well then, researchers of the National Weapons Research Lab, codename "Murasaki[8]". For the time being, the entirety of this facility is being absorbed into the JSDF's Division for Countermeasures against Anomalous Biological Organisms. Effective immediately, I—Yura—will be taking command of this location.

[7] Masayoshi Yura is the section chief of the "Counter-measure against Special Biological Organisms Department", as well as the commander of the Shinjuku-area defense team.

[8] Murasaki is a pseudonym for the institution, it's called Murasaki because it was originally intended to go against the Hamelin Organization.

Chief: This isn't what you said before!

Yura: No, this is exactly what was discussed. If you'd like, the cabinet advisors would be happy to answer your inquiries.

Chief: From the very beginning, you've been aiming for control of this lab, haven't—

(Yura shoots the Chief, who falls to the ground, grunting in pain.)

Chief: You... bastard!

Lab Assistant: Chief—CHIEF!

Yura: Well well now, what did I say? If you move, I shoot. I said that, didn't I? I said... exactly... that! (Yura laughs.) Got it?! Right now? We're at war. While you shits have been keeping busy with your worthless research, my troops and I been fighting at the expense of our own lives! If you want to live a long, healthy life, you will follow our orders. You will obey my command without fail. Do you understand?!

(The chief coughs and spits up blood on the floor.)

Lab Assistant: We need to get him to the sickbay immediately!

Yura: Oh, almost forgot. I've got a question for you.

Lab Assistant: Before any of that, we have to move the Chief! There's so much blood, he—

(Yura shoots the Chief again, killing him. The lab assistant gasps in terror.)

Yura: All right then, that should take care of it.

Lab Assistant: What is this? What is happening...

Yura: I've only got one question: where is the weapon No.7?

Lab Assistant: No.7? You mean Emil?

Yura: Looks like you've taken to keeping that petrifying monster like a pet, huh?

Lab Assistant: Emil is not a goddamn monster!

(Yura slaps her.)

Yura: That's not gonna work at all. I didn't ask for anything resembling your opinion. This is how it's going to go through, huh? How about this, then?

(Yura snaps his fingers and all the men he came with raise their guns.)

If you don't hand over the location and means of controlling No.7 to me, then starting now, for every minute I wait, I will kill one of you. There's 24 of you left—ah, no, your Chief is dead. So, including you, there should be 23[9] people? Anyway, you give me an answer within the next 22 minutes, and there's no problem.

Lab Assistant: What are you talking about—

Yura: I had intended to give you more time, but...

[9] Ever since the No.6 berserk event, the institution has been downsizing, and right now, it's just a demonstration ground of its research.

Lab Assistant:	... I bring you Emil, and then what?
Yura:	Why, I'm going to have him fight and die for our great country, of course! You've got 45 seconds left!
Lab Assistant:	You can't make him do that!
Yura:	Is that so? But you know, desperate times call for desperate measures, haha. 35 seconds.
	(The door opens and Emil runs in.)
Emil:	Miss Scientist!
Lab Assistant:	Emil, stay back!
Yura:	You. Are you No.7?
Emil:	Don't hurt the researchers!
Yura:	If you're a good boy and do what I tell you, I won't do a single thing.
Emil:	I'll go... please, don't shoot them!
Lab Assistant:	Emil! They're going to make you fight Red Eye!
Emil:	It's okay. I may not look it, but I'm strong. I can do it. So please, don't worry about me. I'll definitely come back.
Lab Assistant:	Emil...
Yura:	Looks like our No.7 understands the situation, then.
	(The phone begins to ring.)

CD1 / 12: Kainé - Quarrel *Translation by /u/spffn*

	(The sound of a grandfather clock chiming at the change of the hour.)
Kaali:	(On the phone) Have you forgotten exactly who it is that's providing you with your budget? Please, try to remember exactly why I left Murasaki in your hands. Do you understand me? If you do, then you will bring your guards to my home immediately.
Grandfather:	Kaali... what in the world are you doing?
Kaali:	Nothing that concerns you.
Grandfather:	Don't be ridiculous, Kaali.
Kaali:	I requested very specifically for guardsmen to be placed here.
	(Puppy barks and scene shifts to backyard, where it and Kainé are.)
Kainé:	All right! I'm going to call you 'Shiro', how about that? It's from the name of a princess, Shirayuki. Do you like it? [Shiro barks.]

Oh, no good? [Shiro barks again.] ...Good? Heh, I wonder which you're trying to tell me. I guess I just... don't understand what you're saying...

Kaali: (From inside the house]—are social elite now, how long are you going to—

Grandfather: As I've said, Kainé won't need—

Kaali: My efforts have all been wasted on you two! (Kaali fades out, still yelling.)

Kainé: You already know Grandfather is a kind man but... Grandmother... she really is nice, too. They said that she became a hero in the war against Legion. It's been years, but even now, scores of soldiers come to see her.

[Shiro whines.]

I am happy... I get to be here with Grandfather and Grandmother, so I'm happy... [Shiro whines more.] But sometimes, I'm scared... I don't know what of. It's like black fog, coming from within me. All my life, I've wanted for nothing. And yet at times, I have these dreadful nightmares... I... What should I do?

[Shiro barks.]

You're right, as long as I have you with me, it'll be fine!

Announcement: ... we have been evacuating the areas of Shinjuku, Shibuya, Nakano and Setagaya, but at the present this order has been rescinded. For those in their homes, please try to remain indoors.. I repeat, there has been situation involving Legion. The areas of Shinjuku, Shibuya, Nakano and Setagaya...

Kainé: Legion...?

CD1 / 13 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #1 *Translation by /u/spffn*

(Yura slams down the phone.)

Yura: That damn old witch! She might be a hero, but she doesn't know shit, acting like she can do whatever she wants. But without that money, we can't do a single thing... there's no way in hell I'm going to be the bitch's personal guard! (Yura smashes something on the table.)

Lab Assistant: Getting violent won't solve anything!

Yura: Huh?! Don't you dare talk back to me. What could scientists like you understand about the life of a military man?! (Yura flips the table towards the researcher.)

Emil: Please stop! The researchers haven't done anything wrong.

Yura: I don't want to hear it from a brat! I'll crush you, you little shit.
(Yura grabs Emil by the throat.)

Emil: I can't—My—

Yura: Enough! (Yura drops Emil to the ground.)

Emil: Ahh!

Yura: Surround him and pin him down!

Emil: What is... this?

Lab Assistant:	Emil!
Yura:	Heh, as if I would stand in front of Murasaki's strongest sealing weapon without anything prepared? Imbecile. This is Hamelin's newest, top-of-the-line suppression system[10]. See, it doesn't affect us humans in the slightest. But on anything containing maso, the effect is quite substantial. (Yura turns the machine's intensity up and Emil grunts in pain then vomits.)[11]
Lab Assistant:	Emil! (The men all draw their guns on her as she steps towards him.)
Yura:	Hold on, now! The machine won't hurt you, but this gun still can. You want me to put a bullet through you?
Lab Assistant:	What are you trying to achieve, going as far as to use a machine from Hamelin?!
Yura:	If it's for my purposes, you're going to let me use whatever I want. He's something I could use too, isn't he? Something... I could use? I could... Hold on. That old bat wants a command post... then I could—All right! I've decided what we'll do. Give me the map!
Soldier:	Yes, sir!
Yura:	Here, maybe? Contact tactical headquarters. "Due to unforeseeable circumstances, we must proceed with the recapture of Red Eye in sector B-24 of the civilian residential district. However, to prevent any interference, do not alert the general public." Tell them that.
Lab Assistant:	You can't! All those civilians are going to end up in the middle of your— (Yura knocks her out.)
Yura:	Oh, how I hate women who talk too much.
Emil:	Mi...ss... Scien...tist...
Yura:	Now, let's see! Groups #1 and 6, stay here and continue to hold down the fort. Everyone else, we're headed to B-24!
Soldiers:	Yes, sir!
Yura:	Let's give 'em a hell of a show. There'll be enough of the public there, we could even call them the audience. (He starts laughing maniacally.)

[10] The weapon that Yura unleashed is called "Bible" (SS22). It's a 40cm octagon with a coil that has maso floating within. However, it is only effective against a small sized Legion. Since the Legion is supposedly eliminated, why is the Hamelin Organization still developing weapons against them?

[11] Yura is awarded his high position in the army because he is intelligent and has an apt way of resolving problems. However, he is infamous for violence against the weak and his henchmen.

CD1 / 14 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #2

Translation by /u/spffn

(People screaming and running in terror.)

NieR: Yonah? Yonah! Excuse me, have you seen a little girl by any chance? She's got on a light blue coat with the hood up! Someone—She's...

Bystander: I haven't seen her. More importantly, you have to get out of here! Legion's coming this way!

NieR: Ah, I see. Thank you, sorry for bothering you... Someone? Has anyone seen a little girl?

(NieR runs into a lady.)

NieR: Ah, I'm sorry! Um—

Running Lady: Watch where you're walking! You're gonna hurt someone!

(She leaves, NieR remains on the ground.)

NieR: I'm sorry. Yonah... Yonah, where are you...? I can't give up. I have to protect Yonah, I have to.
I will keep her safe.

Nice Lady: Are you all right? Can you stand?

NieR: Ah, thank you!

Nice Lady: Were you looking for someone just now?

NieR: Yes, my little sister and I were separated. She's wearing a light blue coat, it's kind of tattered.

Nice Lady: I'm not sure if it's the same girl but, I did see a child wearing a coat that color.

NieR: Have you really?

Nice Lady: They were headed for the Mansion. I didn't see the kid's face though, so I don't know if they were a boy or girl.

NieR: Mansion?

Nice Lady: Ah, just past that street there should be a large forest. There's a massive house in it that belongs to some rich person, and we just call it the Mansion. The kid was headed that way.

NieR: Thank you very much!

Nice Lady: Stay safe, okay? They say Legion's headed in this direction!

NieR: I will!

CD1 / 15 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #3

Translation by /u/spffn

(Shiro barking incessantly.)

Kaali: Kainé! Silence that dog at once!

Kainé: My apologies, Grandmother Kaali.

Kaali: Honestly, do I have to tell you once again to get rid of that animal—
(car screeches to a halt out front) What's this? Such a racket.

Yura: Well now, how wonderful it is to see you, Mrs. Kaali. You look lovely.

Kaali: Keep the pointless flattery to a minimum, if you would.

Yura: If only your mood were as lovely...

Kaali: Then I suppose you've finally brought the protection you promised?

Yura: I truly beg your apology, Mrs. Kaali, the preparations took longer than we anticipated. But if you would, please, direct your attention over here. In addition to a full platoon of 62 men, we've prepared our most cutting-edge mobile arms system. You, boot it up.

Soldier: Yes, sir!

P-22:
```
P-22, activation starting...
Locating necessary resources...
Activation in progress.
```

(It continues preparing in the background.)

Yura: How about that? Just as you requested, we spared no expense in exhausting all possible options to prepare a force of arms worthy of you.

Kaali: Mm, and yet it was late. Still, I suppose it's not too awful.

Yura: If I may, we are all ranking members of the Band of the Dragon[12].
Now, in regards to this protection we are providing—

Kaali: We will discuss the specifics of your compensation after the current turmoil has ended. Until then, your efforts are best focused on safeguarding this mansion.

Grandfather: Kaali...

Kaali: Oh, hello dear.

Grandfather: What in the world is an armed platoon here for?

Kaali: They're all from the JSDF to provide protection for our home.

Grandfather: That's—There's no reason for just one house to get this much protection, is there?

Kaali: I have my reasons. You and I were—No, I am the woman who subdued the forces of Legion for this country. That is why.

Grandfather: Don't be unreasonable! Besides, this machine[13] is far more than we need, don't you think?

[12] "Ryuu no Kai" (Band of the Dragon) is a coup d'etat group formed by Yura. The World Purification Organization and the Japanese government have agreed that if they were to broadcast this event, it would cause unnecessary panic to the world. Thus, there are no public records and this event is considered to be a coup d'etat gone wrong.

[13] P-22s are the latest, revamped model of P-11s. They're made to fight against Legion, and once the government announces that Legion are all eliminated, the remaining 242 P-22s are left in the care of the army. These P-22s are then used as patrol units, but it causes some political problems for other countries. After the success of P-22s, P-33s are in development.

Yura: This is but a modest gift from the Department of Defense in consideration of your past contributions.
At any rate, the two of you are both highly-cherished veterans, your Excellency—

Grandfather: Enough with the "Excellency" lines. I'm no longer part of the military.

Kaali: Regardless, this is the protection that I requested be prepared.
You are not involved with it.

Grandfather: ... Is that so?

Yura: Eastern, Western, and Southern units, spread out!
P-22 will be placed at the southern end's main street.

P-22: `P-22... Southern main street... Correcting course…`

Kaali: Ah, please avoid the shrubbery[14] over there if you would.

Yura: Of course, ma'am. Hey! Get the hell out there, idiot. Watch your step.

Kainé: Shiro? Shiro! There's nothing to be frightened of! Oh please, if you bark like that then Grandmother will –

(bushes rustle)

Kainé: Who is it? Is someone there?

Yonah: Um...

Kainé: A child... A little girl? What are you doing here?

Yonah: Where am I? Where's Brother...?

Kainé: "Brother" ...? What's your name?

Yonah: Yonah.

(P-22 makes a crashing sound in the distance.)

Kainé: It's dangerous out here. How about we go inside, sweetheart?

Yonah: What about my brother?

Kainé: I'll look for your brother after this, so let's go inside for now, okay?

Yonah: Okay.

Kainé: Shiro, you come too.

Yonah: So it's not dangerous here?

Kainé: It's safe, there are lots of soldiers protecting it. It'll be fine.

[14] It's an unknown species of white flowers that Kaali is growing in her garden.

CD1 / 16 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #4 *Translation by /u/spffn*

NieR: Yonah! Yonah, are you there?! If you're there, answer me! Yonah! How far out here did she get? And this is someone's property? It's huge...

(A large gust of wind rustles the trees.)

What's that sound? Ahh!
That's—Red Eye?! How did it get that big?! Why is it—It saw me!

Yura: Hahaha! Fire, fire, FIRE! Drive it towards the house!

Soldier A: Commander! The Schumatt's strikes have no effect!

Soldier B: Rear squadron engaging Legion on the western end!
We don't have enough men available to focus on Red Eye! (Yura strikes him.)

Yura: You really ought to keep your voice down. See, you're gonna solve that problem. Somehow or other, you're gonna drag Red Eye over to that big ol' mansion. That's why you're goddamn here! Lure it over, or act like bait for all I give a shit, but lead the bastard in front of that mansion!

Soldier B: U-Understood, sir!

NieR: Damn it! Yonah could be right over there but—Ahh!

Yura: All right! Just like that! Over to the west side of the mansion!
I'll head back now and prep P-22 for the attack!

CD1 / 17 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #5 *Translation by /u/spffn*

Yonah: Miss, I'm scared...

Kainé: It's all right, there's nothing to be afraid of. There are a lot of strong soldiers protecting us.

Kaali: (distantly) You! What is the meaning of this? You've brought Red Eye to my very front yard!

Kainé: Grandmother... What could be going on...?

(A car skids to a halt in front of the house where Kaali is standing.)

Kaali: Do you all intend to destroy my home?! Kill that thing at once!

Yura: Oh my, Mrs. Kaali. This may be a bit troublesome, but—

Kaali: Troublesome or whatever it may be, you've brought Red Eye to my home! What are you thinking? Get that damned thing—

Yura: You just aren't getting it, huh? We all are here, just as you requested, and protecting your precious home as promised, no? Our duty is not to destroy Red Eye, it's to protect this house if I'm not mistaken. Hehe.

Kaali: You...!

Soldier A: Red Eye is approaching!

Yura: Here we go! Disable the safety locks on P-22 missiles and fire as soon as they're ready! Once you've confirmed their impact, proceed with the laser[15]! Pound it with the Schumatt while you're at it! But avoid the head, we want the body. Aim for the body! We destroy that and it can't do a damn thing!

Soldier B: But, sir, Platoon #2 is currently engaging Red Eye! If we fire now, they'll be caught in it—

Yura: They are necessary casualties, then. Who knows?
When this war ends, they may even become heroes.

Soldier B: But, sir— (Yura strikes him down.)

Yura: Useless! All of you are so goddamned useless! (He begins to initiate P-22 on his own.)
Disable the first stage safety locks for guided missiles 1 through 8!

P-22: `#1… #2… #3… #4… Safety locks, disengaged...`

Yura: When we fire, we're going to anchor Red Eye to that spot! After it hits, immediately strike with the irradiated laser for 20 seconds!

P-22: `Warning:     Irradiated laser strikes lasting longer than 40 seconds run the risk of overheating --`

Yura: Ignore the damn safety protocols, you hunk of junk! Hahaha, eat this, you salt demon!
(All the weapons fire upon Red Eye.)

P-22: `Laser lens #2 has encountered an error, encountered an --`

Yura: Check the status of Red Eye!

Soldier C: Yes, sir! We've destroyed Red Eyes' right arm! The left arm is severely damaged, along with a confirmed strike to its lower left abdomen! It can still move!

Yura: No shit! We've mutilated its whole arm and it's still fighting us. This thing really is a monster, huh? P-22, switch to grappling mode! We'll bring this bastard down with sheer strength!

P-22: `P-22, using grappling mode to suppress the enemy.`

NieR: Yonah!

Yonah: Brother! Brother!

Kainé: You're…?

Yonah: That's my brother!

Kainé: Good.

Yonah: Brother, um, I got lost and this lady helped me out.

NieR: Oh, did she? Thank you so very much.

Kainé: It's nothing. Don't let go of her hand again, all right?

NieR: Yes, ma'am!

Kaali: What the hell are you doing?! My mansion, my mansion—You've set my mansion on fire!

[15] Lasers weren't used a lot on the battlefield back in 2010, but due to the discovery of maso and further developments, they are now widely employed in different industries other than arms and weapons.

Grandfather:	What are you raving about? We need to get out of here, now!
Kainé:	Grandfather, Grandmother!
Grandfather:	Kainé! Get out of here immediately!
Yura:	Yes! Just like that! Pin it down!
Soldier C:	Pinning now! We still have some additional power remaining! What?!
Yura:	What is that?
Soldier C:	Its arms... It's growing more arms out of its skin! Power cable 3 of P-22 is... it's ripped them all out!
P-22:	`Sudden irregularity... found... in power supply.` `Warning: sudden --` (P-22 explodes.)
Yura:	So this is... the Kyushu government's Red Eye... It's been this insanely powerful all along?!
Soldier D:	Commander! Legion is... it's crawling out of Red Eye's skin!
NieR:	Yonah, watch out!
Yonah:	Brother!
Kainé:	You two, go through the back and get out of here!
NieR:	But... But Miss, what about you?
Kainé:	I—My Grandmother and Grandfather are still in there.
	(Kaali screams.)
Grandfather:	Kaali—Kaali, watch out! (He gets stabbed.)
Kainé:	Grandfather! Grandfather!!
Grandfather:	Kainé... Oh, Kainé... I need you to listen c-closely. The world's going to get worse from here... and you...you may be dragged into the worst of it...
Kainé:	Grandfather, don't speak!
Grandfather:	But Kainé, you... I— (he gets crushed)
	(Yonah gasps.)
NieR:	Yonah, don't look!
Kainé:	Grandfather! (She screams in pain.)[16]
Yura:	Enough! I'm calling it, it's going to be impossible to capture Red Eye. We're just going to crush the damn thing!
Soldier E:	But, Commander! We've got no effective means of attacking—
Yura:	If you're going to fight a monster, you need to use a monster! Bring out No.7!

[16] Kainé has her grandfather's internal organs on the right side of her face when the Red Eye steps on the upper half of his body.

Soldier E:	Yes, sir!
	(They drag Emil out and toss him to the ground in front of Yura.)
Yura:	Good, you've still got your blindfold. Anything you look at with those eyes of yours petrifies, correct? We're going to focus on destroying Legion, so you're going to turn that Red Eye into stone!
Emil:	But—The troops still fighting haven't been moved yet—
Yura:	Doesn't matter, get over here! You're going to take off that blindfold, and the first thing you get to see is this bastard! (Yura pulls off Emil's blindfold and Emil gasps.)
Yura:	Yes! Here it comes!
Soldier:	Captain! Commander! My body is stiff—
Soldiers:	It burns! Make it stop!
Emil:	This is—It's because of me, my power... No! No, stop it! I don't want this! I don't want to look!
Officer:	The petrification on Red Eye has ceased!
Yura:	What the hell do you think you're doing?! Look at Red Eye, you monster!
Emil:	No, please! My power... My power's hurting the people in range of it!
Yura:	Tch, you!
Soldier:	Yes!
Yura:	Pass me that red medic's kit. Here it is! You damned monster, you're going to do as I say! (He injects Emil with a drug)
Emil:	What is this... medicine...?
Yura:	Just a little pep-up to make this easier on us both.
Emil:	No—No, don't—St... Plea... No...
Yura:	That's just too bad. Weapons should act more like weapons and do their job.
	(Emil starts screaming in the middle of Yura's sentence, losing control.)
Yura:	I guess now's as good as ever.
Soldier:	Commander, where are you—
Yura:	Isn't it obvious? I'm getting the hell out of here![17]
Soldier:	Commander! Commander, please wait! You bastard!

[17] Since Yura runs away from the scene, he becomes a fugitive. The police issue an arrest warrant for him, but he is never caught. He changes his name to Tyrann and successfully becomes a Gestalt. However, the government discovers his Replicant and destroys it, leaving him with nowhere to return to. So during the next 1000 years, he illegally takes other people's Replicants one after another to survive.

CD1 / 18 The Boy, the Girl, and the Weapon #6 *Translation by /u/spffn*

Kainé:	Grandfather!
NieR:	Miss! It's dangerous, we need to run!
Kaali:	Kainé...
Kainé:	Grandmother! Grandmother Kaali!
Kaali:	Your Grandfather's death is... regretful. I... No, we... there's something we never told you.[18]
Kainé:	Grand...mother...?
	(Red Eye grabs Kaali.)
Kainé:	Grandmother!
Soldier:	It's grabbed the woman! The arm! Fire at the arm!! Destroy it!
Kainé:	Grandmother! Grandmother Ka— (Red Eye swallows Kaali whole.) No... You can't... NO!
	(thinking) Deep down... within me... there's a dark power... Just what is it?
	(Kainé screams in pain, the sound distorting at the end as she loses control.)
NieR:	What's—
Soldier:	Over there! There's a girl clinging to Red Eye!
NieR:	Someone... is going up against Red Eye barehanded?
Kainé:	My grandmother! My grandfather! Give them back! Give them back! Give! Them! Back!
Soldier:	Look! The girl's ripped the woman out of Red Eye's stomach!
	(Kaali falls to the ground, coughing.)
Kaali:	Kainé... you finally...
Yonah:	Brother!
NieR:	Yonah!
	(Red Eye screeches and Emil begins to scream back.)
Soldier:	We can do this... We can win! With No.7 and that girl, Red Eye will— (Red Eye is immediately ripped to parts and falls.)
	Red Eye is... dead... A human, with her bare hands... All by herself, she...

[18] Although Kainé is told that her parents have passed away, she is actually a "program baby" created by the genes of Kaali, her grandfather, and the combined analysis of Legions' attack patterns. When Legion is announced as being eradicated, Kaali feels guilty for what she has done, so she takes it upon herself to raise Kainé while sealing the trigger for her offensive form. Unfortunately, this series of events has triggered Kainé to unlock the mechanism as she witnesses the horrifying deaths of her grandparents.

Kainé: I'll kill you! Kill you kill you kill YOU KILL KILL KILL KILL!
(Kainé turns her attacks on the soldiers.)

Officer: No! They're going to murder us all! Oh, God—Help me, HELP ME, HELP ME!

(Kainé continues to rampage, along with Emil.)

NieR: Stop—Please, stop!

Soldier: What are you doing, kid?!

NieR: Both of you, stop! Red Eye's dead! There's no reason to keep fighting!

Yonah: Brother... I'm scared...

NieR: I'm sorry, Yonah, but I can't just leave her—
(He gets hit with a stray strike.) Please stop! Both of you, stop!

Soldier: Give it up—They're just monsters!

NieR: No, you're wrong! They're not! She's still a human! I'm begging you, stop fighting!

(Kainé and Emil freeze.)

Soldier: They... stopped? Pin No.7 down! Pin him down, now!

(Emil comes to his senses under the pressure of the suppressor.)

Emil: What have I done?

NieR: Miss!

Kainé: I—What did I...

NieR: Can you hear me? Can you hear my voice?

Kainé: You...

Commander: Confirm that all destroyed sections of Red Eye are still here!
Capture everyone from Yura's teams! Don't let a single one escape!

Yonah: Brother!

NieR: It's okay. It's all right, Yonah.

Yonah: Brother, I was so scared...

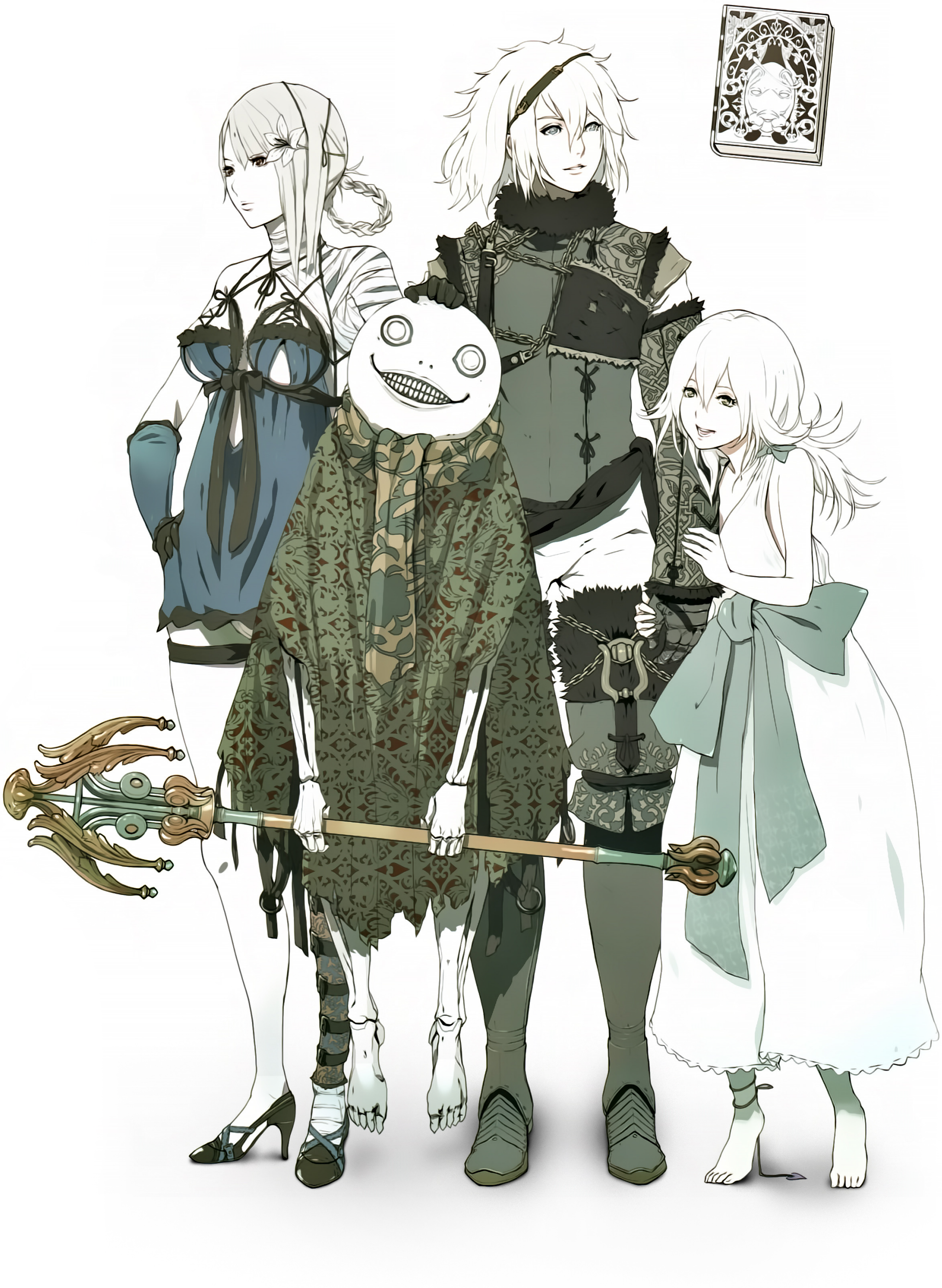
NieR: I'm so sorry, Yonah... They've never helped me or spoken to me, we've never even met, but... for some reason, when I saw them, I... Why did I...

Commander: Administer an immediate sedative to No.7 and collect the weapon. Hurry and gather the missiles from P-22 as well! If word gets out that this was related to Hamelin, it'll be on your asses.

NieR: Looks like it all over... Miss, are you okay?

Kainé: What did I—Grandfather... Grandmother... I'm... I'm scared...
(Kainé starts crying, Shiro whines.)

Soldier: (distantly) We've got survivors over here!



2053

Research by "The World Purification Commission" (the public face of Project Gestalt) discovers there is a high probability over time of Gestaltized souls losing their self-awareness and going berserk. These cases are referred to as "relapsed" Gestalts.
If they are left unattended in this state, there is an almost certain chance of the death of the subject.

Analysis reveals that in order to stabilize a Gestalt's self-awareness, stable solid purified Maso must be extracted from a Gestaltized person who has maintained his being after the transformation. It is determined that Gestaltization via one of the sealed Grimoires would have the highest chance of producing this special "Original Gestalt". Grimoire Noir is selected for this task and several cloned duplicates of it are created.

The World Purification Commission, in conjunction with the Hamelin Organization, begins setting up experiments using the cloned grimoires. These experiments are disguised as relief centers in poverty-stricken areas and refugee camps. These aid centers begin handing out the Grimoire Noir copies in hopes of finding a Gestalt attuned to the book's power. NieR, who had been living in such a region in what remains of the Shinjuku area, is tricked into entering one of the relief centers in hopes of gaining medicine for his sick sister, Yonah. Sensing something was amiss, he escapes with her just as several failed candidates transform into Relapsed Gestalts and begin going berserk.



Relapsed Gestalts pursue and attack NieR and Yonah while they take refuge in a supermarket. Seeing no way out of the situation, NieR offers himself up for Gestaltization to Grimoire Noir in order to protect his sister. He becomes a self-aware "Original Gestalt". During this time, Yonah also comes into contact with one of the Noir clones and accidentally undergoes the Gestalt conversion. Failing to synchronize up with the book's power, her Gestalt immediately begins to relapse.

The World Purification Commission soon meets Gestalt NieR and convinces him that they can save Yonah by putting her relapsing Gestalt into cold sleep until Project Gestalt completes. In exchange, NieR must provide purified Maso from his body to maintain the self-awareness of other Gestalts in the project. NieR accepts the offer and begins providing the Maso to maintain the system. This continues for the next millennium and beyond...

NieR Gestalt's prologue begins in summer 2049 instead of 2053.

CD1 / 19: Report #4 *Translation by /u/spffn*

CURRENT STATE OF PROGRESS ON PROJECT GESTALT

The Rogue Red Eye Incident:

According to a later investigation, the recent incident with Red Eye has been confirmed as being related to the conspiracy between the National Weapons Research Lab and a portion of the JSDF's vie for power. What was unknown until the incident, however, is that staff members had also been bribed with large sums of money and goods. Much of the funds were received from the Kaali estate in the form of donations, but taking into account her standing as a National Hero, the Internal Investigations Bureau has decided it will not question her actions.

In addition to this, Masayoshi Yura's whereabouts following the incident are unknown. Yura, the previous acting chief of the JSDF's Division for Countermeasures against Anomalous Biological Organisms and commander of the Shinjuku Defense Corps, remains at large.

The Girl who Overthrew Red Eye:

According to eyewitness testimony of JDSF forces and the ruined remains of Red Eye, we reason that her abilities allow for augmenting the physical capabilities of the human body to an extreme degree. Leaving aside reports of her ability to jump over 20 meters and the destruction of Red Eye's outer shell, an investigation deeper into the actual circumstances of the event was considered. However, as a matter of national security, it was decided that the Japanese Internal Investigations Bureau will be handling all further research. Hereafter, any details pertaining to the girl are unknown.

The National Weapons Research Lab and the Weapon No.7:

One of the responsible parties of this recent Red Eye incident, the chief of research at the National Weapons Research Lab, is confirmed dead. To prevent a second, similar act of terrorism from occurring, per discussions between the World Purification Commission and Japanese Government, it's been decided that personnel from the Commission shall be placed within and monitor the Internal Investigations Bureau indefinitely.

As for the weapon No.7, after pacification it was placed into suspended animation and returned to the National Weapons Research Lab once more. Due to the inherent risk of No.7 as a weapon, disposal was initially considered. But because the originally intended method of destroying the No.6 weapon is yet unknown, No.7's capabilities of sealing it were judged to be indispensable, thus deferring its removal.

Additional Notes: Regarding Male Trial Subject A, the "Original Gestalt":

Following these events, the subject of this information and previous pending concerns, Male Subject A, has been selected as the "Original Gestalt" per the success of his pact in Project Grimoire Noir. At the same time, we have on record that Male Subject A's younger sister (designated Female Subject B) has taken to the specialized stasis procedure. Male Subject A, as part of an official government contract, was promised that Female Subject B would be included in the Gestalt decryption process. Unfortunately, due to damage to the data collected during the Gestaltization, we have ascertained that later decryption from Gestalt may be prone to failure. Considering Male Subject A's vital role and the length of time required of Project Gestalt, there is potential for this information to become a large issue, and we concluded that further observation of the subject was necessary. As a result, releases of this information cannot be shared with Male Subject A, but Observers will record it as refuted.

That is all.

Head of Kanto Sector C, Observer α: Devola

Regarding the subject of the additional notes:

Until the collection of necessary Maso completes (roughly 1000 years), the subject will be preserved as Principal Confidential Matter S.

Head of Kanto Sector C, Observer β: Popola

CD2 / 01: The Promise of One Thousand Years

Translation by /u/spffn

※ This is Tokyo in 2058. Original NieR has become the perfect Gestalt, so he is under the custody and surveillance of the Japanese government and the World Purification Organization. Although Original NieR is a Gestalt, he looks no different than any other ordinary humans.

※ Grimoire Noir is programmed to obey Original NieR.

※ The observers are equipped with weapons that could utilize magic so that they will not be inferior to the Grimoires.

Doctor: And your little sister, you said her name was Yonah?

NieR: Yes.

Doctor: We've been researching all possible options, but there's still not a suitable treatment for her case…

NieR: But it's already been five years! When exactly is she going to wake up?!

Doctor: I'm very sorry. There are several people working day and night on the investigation, but…

NieR: … I'm sorry, I know you're all working very hard.

Doctor: And the same to you. My apologies that we've been so little help.
If there are any changes in our progress, I'll let you know right away.

NieR: Please, if you would. Sorry for taking up your time.

(NieR leaves the building.)

Doctor: … The only successful case, the "Original Gestalt" … The hero who can save the world, but can't save his little sister…

(his phone rings) Yes? Ah, yes! I understand. I'll be there shortly. (he hangs up)

NieR: Damn it!

Noir: Something troubling you, Your Grace?

NieR: Noir… It's been five years… She went to sleep five years ago, and now… The government and World Purification Commission gave me their word, and they haven't been able to help her, even the slightest, in all this time?!

Noir: Being impatient will solve nothing. They've devoted their best and brightest to your sister's case for you.

NieR: If they really are the best and brightest then they should already…! They've done everything they can. What if there's nothing that can help Yonah anymore? If that's true, I can't…

Noir: I understand it's difficult, Your Excellency. However, you are the savior of all humanity. Just by existing, the people can be at peace and find the strength to Gestaltize. It's only natural that everyone would strive to help you, our Lord, and your sister, Yonah.

NieR: Please, enough. I'm not a lord and I'm certainly no savior.

(A few men run up to NieR.)

Noir: What's this? Observers?

Observer A: I extend my deepest apologies, Your Grace, but we must request that you go no further. You've only be given permission to travel as far as the highway in Yoyogi. If you proceed, we, your Observers, will be unable to provide protection.

NieR: Protect me?

Noir: Protection? You, the lapdogs of the government? Provide protection? Laughable! If there is some concern, then out with it!

NieR: Stand down, Noir. They're just doing their jobs, too.

Noir: As you command, sir.

NieR: ... None of this is anyone's fault.

(The doctor from earlier knocks on the door of a conference room,
where politicians from a previous track are gathered.)

Politician A: Come in.

Doctor: Thank you, sir.

Politician A: For some time now, we've been faced with a predicament: the current state of the Original Gestalt's younger sibling. However, it's been decided that you shall proceed with plan B2.

Doctor: Plan B2? Then you mean, she—

Politician A: Yes, she will be.

Politician B: Until all stages of Project Gestalt have finalized, she will remain in cryogenic stasis. We'd originally planned to conceal this from the Original, but as we've been informed from recent reports, the lack of change in his sibling's condition has appeared to make him emotionally unstable as of late. One thing that is for certain, even if it means he loses himself, we need him to want to keep Project Gestalt going.

Doctor: But Plan B2 means we couldn't find a treatment at all, correct?

Politician A: Unfortunately.

Politician B: Someone will inform him shortly that we couldn't find anything. That with current medicine, a one-time treatment that even comes close to totally wiping out the disease is impossible.

Doctor: I see. Who is going to explain this to the Original?

Politician A: We decided it should be you. We'll be relying on you.

Doctor: I couldn't—I can't possibly lie to him.

Politician A: Who said anything about lying? It's not like there isn't a chance that somewhere in the world, proper treatment will be discovered. Besides, we have other ways of dealing with this, if needed.

Doctor: You wouldn't!

Politician B: Before long, someone might spread the word that we have discovered the sister attempted to feign her death and was dealt with swiftly and accordingly.

Doctor: What are you talking about?!

Politician B: Now, of course, we put an end to it. If his sister died, the Original's emotional instability would grow out of control and then the entire plan would grind to a halt. Or so I've heard. But even I find that a bit too cruel. So, what do you say?

Doctor: ... Yes, sir. I understand. I'll do it.

Politician B: We're counting on you. Whatever support you may need, ask for it and we will do our best to provide it. After all, if we didn't have him, the entirety of humanity would be doomed, as you know.

Doctor: ... Please excuse me.

Lab Assistant: Mr. NieR, you can relax, there's no need to worry. It's likely that under the proposed stasis procedure her cellular regeneration capabilities will stabilize. We have many others with the same condition as Yonah who have shown positive results. This is the National Weapons Research Laboratory—I know, it's a very official sounding title, but nowadays we primarily focus on anything regarding Project Gestalt. Our work requires a large facility, so much of our services cost a great deal of money, but... Yonah is quite lucky, isn't she?

NieR: I suppose.

Lab Assistant: Thanks to you becoming the Original Gestalt, a great deal of people—No, the entirety of the human race can be saved. So I assure you, we will stop at nothing to save your sister.

NieR: I'm not that important of a person. But, please... please take care of Yonah.

Lab Assistant: Of course. I promise.

(The phone rings.)

Lab Assistant: Yes, may I help you? Huh? Yes. Yes, I understand.
(To NieR.) It seems you have a call from someone in the government.

NieR: For me?

NieR: A... A thousand years...?

Doctor: Yes, the remaining maso particles need to be neutralized, else her later decryption from Gestalt form will be difficult. Relapse recovery can't be done in situations where maso particles are present. In the meantime, to slow the progression of her relapse, we'll be placing your sister's Gestalt into "Cold Sleep" cryostasis. When Project Gestalt finalizes in 1000 years, I'm sure we'll have finally been able to found a cure for Yonah. And of course, as the Original Gestalt, you will not age with the time, either. So, you'll be able to be with a happy, healthy Yonah! Or so I've been told.

NieR: But that's just... It's such a long time. She must sleep for all of it?

My deepest apologies. The current administration—No... this is simply the limit of the human race's abilities currently. But with you, the one and only Original Gestalt, we will be saved. I swear to you; I will dedicate the utmost effort to Yonah's preservation.

(NieR slams his hand down on the table.)

NieR: It's not... I... Yonah...

Doctor: It's truly out of my hands...I'm sorry.

NieR: 1000 years... Another 1000 years...
Yonah... What am I supposed to do now? Oh god, Yonah...

	(Observers approach NieR.)
Observer:	If you proceed further, then we—
Noir:	Leave now. Our grace has requested that he be left alone at the present time. This is no place for your grandstanding. Withdraw from my sight!
Observer:	Hmph. We understood you the first time. We're just doing our jobs. You'd do well to watch your tongue from now on.
Noir:	Would you like to see just how powerful we are, lapdog? (Noir begins to charge an attack.)
NieR:	Stop it.
Noir:	But, my lord—
NieR:	Knock it off! Just be quiet!
Noir:	Yes, my lord! (Noir stops.)
NieR:	You, observers. You don't need to shadow me anymore.
Observers:	But we were assigned—
NieR:	If we meet again like this, I will show you no mercy. Go back and tell your bosses this: I'm not going to run away. I'm going to live. Until those 1000 years pass, I will survive. No matter what it takes, I will wait for Yonah. Because they'll be able to save her then.
Noir:	My lord, I will follow you wherever your travels may lead you. I shall lay down my life for you, should it be necessary. The completion of Project Gestalt will come, and until that day, we will face the future.
NieR:	Yeah.
Noir:	In times of hardship, remember this: No matter the obstacle, I, the great Grimoire Noir, shall clear it for you, and fight whatever comes our way.
NieR:	Thank you, Noir. I swear, I will get Yonah back. No matter what the cost. Nothing will stop me.

YOKO FACT 6 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

Why doesn't it ever get completely dark at night?

Yoko: The axis of the earth has changed in that time period (between 2003 and 3000); the sun won't sink below the horizon even at night – it'll be like a midnight sun. Because of this, half of the Earth is always lit, while the other side is plunged in never-ending darkness. The dark side on the Earth will later be known as The Kingdom of Night.

But truly, this is all because the development team didn't want to include a day-night cycle.

YOKO FACT 7 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

The day it rained salt in Shinjuku- What is "Project Gestalt?"

So, can I direct detailed questions on the worldview to Yoko specifically?

Yoko: Shoot. I'll answer to the best of my ability.

Yoko, were you the only brains behind "Project Gestalt" and "Replicant System"?

Yoko: The general idea came from me, but it was later refined by Cavia's planners, programmers, Kikuchi and Natori. They all contributed to different parts of the concept.

The game began halfway through the 21st century in Shinjuku, I was quite surprised that it was snowing in summer?

Yoko: That isn't snow but salt. The corpses of victims suffering from chlorination decomposed and fell from the sky.

In 2003, Caim and Angel came to this world from a multi-dimensional world. After they fought with the giant, they were shot down by fighter planes. What came out of their bodies was the "demonic element". When humans come in contact with the demonic element, they're pulled into contract ala DOD styled. Except instead of a contract, it's more like a forced curse. "Become a servant to god and destroy the world according to its will, if you reject then you shall die" is the content of the contract. If they reject the contract, they'll suffer chlorination and die, if they accept it, they'll turn into servants of god(legions).

No matter the outcome, they won't be able to live as humans. "Project Gestalt" was devised as a counter for that, right?

Yoko: The Gestalt process was a system where a person's mentality dwells in a yorishiro refined through the dragon's corpse. DOD's contract involves an exchange of souls, but in this case the contractor – the "dragon", is already soulless and an empty yorishiro, so there is no soul to exchange with. That's why the person's soul will simply be transferred into the yorishiro and take over that.

If people go through the Gestalt process, they can avoid the WCS?

Yoko: Because their body is separated from their soul, they have no fear of entering a contract when they touch the demonic element.

And the soul can be reunited with the body.

Yoko: It's possible. However, though the soul shall remain ageless and live on indefinitely, the body isn't made of the same stuff. That's how the "Replicant System" came to be—having androids manage fake bodies without a consciousness within a regulated area. If they die, then the androids make more, rinse and repeat. They make the Replicants who are immune to WCS exterminate the legions and uncover the truth behind the WCS. During that time, the Gestalts sleep and eventually regain their human form and everyday life after everything's been said and done. That's how "Project Gestalt" and "Replicant System" should've ideally functioned.

Eishima: These kinds of settings are so complicated—you won't even know unless you ask Yoko. I had to ask him a lot of questions while writing the short stories, and I learned quite a bit.

YOKO FACT 8 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

A product of coincidence from experiments "Gestalt NieR"

Yoko: The humans have managed to combine science and magic through the dragon's corpse, leading to the successful Gestalt process. However, there were fatal "inconveniences". One of them was that Gestalts were weak to sunlight. The other one is that a soul that went through the Gestalt process will eventually lose its sense of self and start attacking humans, eventually dying.

Those are the "relapsed Gestalts", the Shades that attack the replicants.

Yoko: The siblings NieR and Yonah took part in the Gestalt experiment, but NieR became suspicious of the project and escaped the facility with Yonah. NieR probably realized the dangers of the Gestalt process.

After that, they were attacked by Shades, and NieR had no choice but to make a contract with Grimoire Noir, thereby becoming a Gestalt and gaining the powers of magic to protect Yonah.

Yoko: That is the beginning of the game. Yonah also touched Grimoire Noir and became a Gestalt like NieR, but since she was unhealthy to begin with, she immediately began to relapse.

And NieR didn't relapse at all?

Yoko: He just "happened to have the stabilizing factor that allows him to keep his sense of self", regardless of his readiness to become a relapsed Gestalt. The actual reason was unknown, and even in later experiments, he was the only one that remained stable. The World Purification Organization used NieR for that. His sister, who became a relapsed Gestalt will die somewhere down the road, so they convinced him that they'd find a solution to that in exchange for him providing his demonic element as a stabilizing agent until then.

And as a result, he did that for over 1000 years?

Yoko: That's how it ends up as. The Gestalts (Shades) treat him like their "king". Because if Gestalt NieR didn't exist, they would all relapse. However, a way to save Yonah wasn't found, and he realized that nothing's going to happen if he just waits, so he put Gestalt Yonah (soul) into Replicant Yonah (body) and tried to get back his own body, so that they could live together again.

I understand Gestalt NieR's objective now.
So Devola and Popola supported a Shadowlord like that?

Yoko: Devola and Popola interceded as beings programmed to complete "Project Gestalt" –the general will of humanity. Their objective is the completion of "Project Gestalt", not the "Happiness of the Shadowlord". The Shadowlord's rampage puts flaws into "Project Gestalt". In order to stop that, they tried to fuse "Grimoire Weiss" and "Grimoire Noir" to return all Gestalts (souls) to their respective Replicants (bodies).

2764

Replicants, who had been obediently scrubbing the world of contaminated Maso and eradicating the final remnants of the Legion for the last several centuries under the androids' command, begin to develop sentience.

3000~

Most Replicants have acquired sentience by the beginning of the new millennium. Their development is influenced by their environmental stimuli and has little relation to their original Gestalts.
Several civilizations and cultures rapidly begin developing among the Replicants. Most gather around old world artifacts and buildings of significance. Technological development among the Replicants is roughly at the equivalent of the medieval level.



3276

Despite newfound sentience, the Replicants' purification of the world continues under the influence of the androids.
The remnants of the Legion decrease dramatically over the last centuries.
Hearing the legend of a forbidden land where one's greatest desire can be fulfilled, a young Replicant enters the ground where the final battle against the Legion Commander, Red Eye, took place over a millennium ago - Jerusalem. Entering with the body of his dead lover into a thick white mist left in the wake of the slain Red Eye, the Replicant wishes for her resurrection.
Much to the desperate Replicant's surprise, his lover takes form from the mist. Her eyes burned a fiery red... The revived lover immediately tears the Replicant apart with an overwhelming display of force. A new Red Eye had been born...

3287

The revived Red Eye amasses the last remnants of the Legion under its command and begins a march of terror against the Replicants left protecting the world.
An android and four Replicants band together and challenge the Red Eye. After a massive battle, they manage to slay the commander and rout the last of the Legion.
The android conducts a ceremony to send the last of the corrupt Maso left behind back to the parallel world. With the last of the Legion and the White Chlorination Syndrome causing Maso eradicated, the purification of the world is complete.

3288

With the world purified, Gestalts begin to awaken as the next phase of Project Gestalt begins.

The newly self-aware Replicants see the Gestalts as body-snatching monsters and begin attacking them on sight. Battles between Replicants and Gestalts, dubbed Shades, begin to take place.

In regions where androids are solidly in control, Replicants are influenced into accepting the merger with Gestalts. The Gestalts safely return to their human bodies. Though, this is rare.



3300

In areas where peaceful merger between Gestalt and Replicants has failed, the Gestalts look toward the "Revival Ceremony" in the Grimoire Project to forcefully re-integrate.

Despite having been treated with Gestalt NieR's purified Maso,
re-awaken Gestalts begin to relapse and go berserk.

Gestalt NieR, who had been providing Maso to maintain the Gestalt system for over 1000 years, begins to suspect Yonah will not be revived if this continues and if he does not act...

3361

The story of NieR Gestalt takes place. We will, however, consider NieR Replicant to be canonical (even if those two stories aren't incompatible).

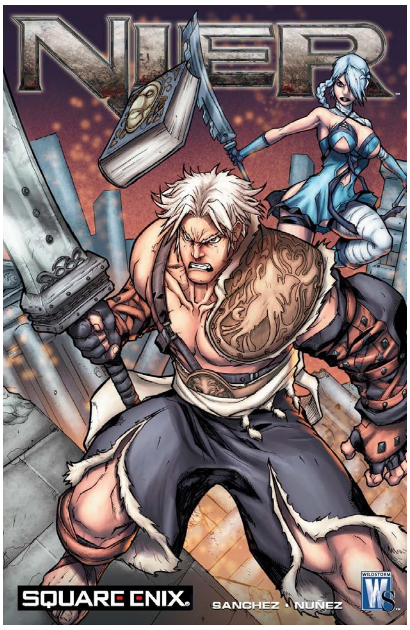
You can read more about the differences between NieR Gestalt and NieR Replicant on page 225.

NIER (Comics)

NIER is a three-part online comic book series written by Ricardo Sanchez and published by Wildstorm, an imprint of DC Comics. The comics hint at what caused the "Black Scrawl" disease and the cataclysmic event that led to the condition of the world. The NIER comics are available on the NIER website and through the PlayStation Store and Xbox Live Marketplace.









The Red and the Black

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It takes place 2 years before the events in-game.

This English version was brought to you by Defade.

A "daily life" gained by sacrificing everything.
Colors seen in the Shades tell of courage and madness.

1

A bird chirped at a distance. Maybe today's weather will be fine. Picking up an egg from the grass fields wet with dew, NieR looked at the sky. This is the last one. Chickens lay one egg per day, so it's not easy to miss one.

"Are you done?"

The hen owner called out to him just as NieR finished counting the eggs in the basket. NieR nodded and handed over the basket.

"Oh, good work."

One, two... the man confirmed the number of eggs and smiled.

"My wife had just gotten better, so you don't have to come anymore. You were a great help."

The man's wife had a fever five days ago and slept in. Gathering the eggs in the mornings used to be her job.

"Here's the payment I promised, but are you sure that you don't need money or food?"

While the man's wife recovered, NieR woke up earlier than anyone in the village and gathered the eggs. What he wanted as payment for his job was a freshly hatched chick.

"It's fine. Yonah will be happy with this."

"I see. Well, just take one from the basket over there."

All of them hatched yesterday. NieR couldn't really tell apart the chicks, but he chose the one that looked the healthiest. The chick struggled - maybe it didn't want to leave its companions. NieR held it in his hands, taking great care to not drop it or squeeze it too tightly, and ran towards his house.

The village woke up fast. No one was on the roads when he left home, but now it was filled with crisscrossing villagers. While he was returning their greetings, a voice called out to him. It was the female owner of the food shop.

"You came at the right time. NieR, I heard that Popola asked you to pick up some herbs today, so can you please get me some mushrooms on the way as well?"

"Okay."

People don't really want to go out of the village - they find it dangerous and troublesome. They must take great care when walking outside - they can't provoke the short-tempered wild animals nor go near shadows of any kind. They can only go outside in midday—and even then, it's only for a few hours. In the morning or evening, they have to be close to a village or a city...

"How about I give you pumpkins as payment?
I just got some big and sweet ones. Yonah likes them, doesn't she?"

Thanks, NieR answered, and took off again. Everyone in this village is nice. If they were not... then it wouldn't be surprising for a pair of orphaned siblings like them to die out in the wild, even if they had the house left behind by their parents. Once he ran past the fountain plaza, NieR began to see their house. Someone's silhouette was shown on the window - it was Yonah. She disappeared the next moment - maybe she became aware of NieR's presence.

"Brother, welcome back."

Before NieR even opened the door, Yonah jumped out. Her breath was labored from running down the stairs.

"I'm back, Yonah. I told you not to run in the mornings or evenings."

"Ah."

Yonah had a very weak body. She was bound to get sick with the flu whenever the seasons changed, and she would get a fever if she just slept a little later than usual. She couldn't even get too excited without developing coughs. Her stomach wasn't very strong either—she'd either get stomach cramps or throw everything up.

"I'm sorry. Will I begin to cough unstoppably again?"

"You'll be fine if you eat a good breakfast. Let's go in, it's rather cold and windy today."

"I brought something for you," NieR said while closing the door, and Yonah's face lit up.

"What is it?"

He brought his hands close to Yonah's ear. The chick enclosed in them chirped quietly, but that was more than enough.

"A chick!"

"You're right. Here, hold out your hand."

He put the chick on top of Yonah's hands. It was surprised at the sudden brightness, so it shrunk into itself and began shaking.

"It's so fluffy and warm!"

"It's still small, so you can keep it inside the house."

"Really?"

"We kept some when mother was still alive."

It was NieR's job to feed the chickens they kept in their front yard. Their mother was busy with keeping the family up and running by herself and didn't have time to spare for that. Their father worked in a faraway city and was rarely at home. Sometime after Yonah's birth, he died outside. That was why NieR didn't remember much about his father.

Living or dead, his father didn't change their everyday lives much. His mother grew vegetables in a small field made in the garden, tailored clothes at the request of the villagers, and repaired clothing. As far as he knew, his mother never stopped her hands. When they finally did stop, so did his mother's time. That was five years ago. NieR had just turned ten, and Yonah was one and a half years old. It came without any warning. In a completely normal evening, NieR's mother turned around and told him to 'bring her the plate from the shelves' while stirring the pot. She fell while keeping her posture.

Not knowing what was going on, NieR ran out of his house and towards Popola's library. Being a manager of so many books, she'd be bound to enlighten him on that issue. Not only NieR, but everyone in the village believed that. However, throwing one look at his fallen mother, Popola shook her head sadly. The abruptness of her death was unbelievable. She died as suddenly as an object breaking. Even after Popola's older twin, Devola came to help with moving his mother into a coffin, and even after the villagers began preparing for the funeral, he did not comprehend the reality of things. He didn't even cry.

No, during the funeral, he wanted to cry once. The inside of his throat tightened painfully, and his vision became blurry. But he stopped his tears immediately because Yonah cried out first. Yonah wasn't old enough to understand her mother's death yet. She probably became uneasy when she saw NieR about to cry. When NieR smiled at her, she immediately stopped her tears. She was already smiling when NieR wiped her tear-streaked face. He understood when he saw that smile. Now that both his father and mother were dead, he was the only one who could protect little Yonah.

2

After a meager breakfast of the leftovers from the day before yesterday, NieR prepared to go out.

"Brother, can't I come as well?"

Though some herbs were seen throughout the village, the greatest number of herbs grew outside the eastern door in this season. Yonah was brought there once.

"I want to help..."

She began to say but was stopped by coughs. It was not a serious cough, and when NieR put his hand on her forehead, he didn't feel a fever coming up. However, ...

"Not today. You're going to have a hard time if you get ill at night."

"Oh...."

A week ago, she had a fever and slept in. The fever had gone down now, and she regained her appetite, but a worrying fact remained - her slight cough continued.

"In exchange, you can go out for a bit."

Out of pity for the crestfallen Yonah, he gave her this suggestion.
As expected, Yonah was back into bright spirits and said that she wanted to go on errands.

"Well then, one onion and one ginseng."

"Can I get the smallest ginseng?"

"Nope. Didn't Popola tell you that ginseng is good for your body?"

"Okay. I'll eat ginseng. Then, both my fever and my cough will get better, right?"

Instead of answering, NieR patted her head and put a bronze coin into her hand. He'd get payment for herb-picking today, so he could afford to spare a bronze coin. The weather outside was good. Yonah was overjoyed at her first outing in a long time and tried to run out with basket in hand. However, her cough could have gotten worse if she ran around that much. NieR gripped Yonah's hand tightly.

"Brother, the eastern door isn't this way..."

"I'll walk you to the fountain."

A gentle slope led from their house to the fountain, so they might have been tempted to run. However, traffic increased further down, and Yonah probably wouldn't be so rash as to run. He thought that he might be a bit overprotective, but he couldn't bear to watch Yonah suffer from a fever.

"Brother! I just heard a splash in the waterway! Was that a fish?"

"The fish in the waterway doesn't jump out."

He had heard that there were fish in the sea that flew, but the fish in the village's waterway were comparatively quiet.

"I want to go draw some water too."

"Not yet. A bucket of water is quite heavy, and it's dangerous - you could fall into the waterways."

The village's waterway provided water instrumental to everyday life. To keep the water from pollution, there were designated places for fishing, and the children were forbidden to play in the water. That's why NieR, Yonah, and most of the villagers couldn't swim. If they fell into the waterways, they wouldn't be able to expect help from anyone.

"If only I could help you more..."

"Yonah, you're going on an errand now, aren't you? You're helping me all right."

Yonah nodded happily in response.
Eventually, they heard a singing voice from the fountain backed by the gentle sounds of plucked strings.

"It's Devola!"

During sunny days, Devola sat in front of the fountain and sang to the plucking of her favorite instrument. Just like a library without Popola, NieR found a village without Devola's voice hard to imagine. Yonah's hand slipped out of his grasp, but NieR didn't try to stop her. The sisters Devola and Popola were both a motherly and sisterly figure to Yonah, and she admired them very much.

"Good morning. Yonah, has your fever gone down?"

Devola lightly nudged Yonah's cheeks and ruffled her hair.

"Yeah. Right now, I am going on..."

Her words were cut off by a dry cough. Devola looked up at NieR, who had just arrived.

"Her fever receded three days ago, but she still has a cough."

"I see. It doesn't seem to be serious though."

It's not the kind of cough accompanied by phlegm, nor the kind that makes a whooshing sound whenever you breathe. It's a dry cough that seems almost unreliable. It's not that painful, but Yonah has never had this kind of cough before. That fact worried NieR.

"After you're done with your errand, go and see Popola for a bit.
Yesterday night, she made some cough medicine for the old lady in the weapons shop.
There should still be some left."

Remembering the bitter taste of Popola's medicine, Yonah frowned. Seeing her face, Devola said,

"If you drink your medicine like a good girl, I think Popola will read you a book as a reward."

"Really? She'll read me the story about that big tree?"

"Yeah."

"I will see Popola, drink my medicine like a good girl and have a book read to me."

"You still have an errand to run before that, right?"

"Ah, right!"

I'm off, said Yonah and turned on her heels. Thanking a happily smiling Devola, NieR took off for the eastern door. After passing through his house again and running up the demanding slope, NieR saw the eastern door before his eyes. A familiar and sleepy-looking guard was stretching.

"Good morning."

"Ah, mornin'. Take care if you're going outside.
Apparently, someone spotted some Shades near the village."

Shades. They're much, much more dangerous than beasts in the wilderness. They are black enemies that attack people without discrimination and are the prime reason that the villagers don't want to go out.

"Today's weather is fine, so they'll probably behave themselves as well."

Shades are weak to sunlight. That's why they're rarely spotted during sunny days or midday. However, during cloudy days or evenings with weak sunlight, shadows or dark places within the bushes became dangerous. Shades are weak to sunlight and sunlight only. So, no matter how bright, a torchlight won't have any effect on them. The reason for that is unknown. Much about the Shades is unknown in the first place. Are they living beings? What do they eat? How do they multiply? How much reasoning do they have?

Luckily, there have been no rumors of Shades dwelling about the eastern door—but in their place were wild goats. They're about as short-tempered as the sheep in the plains and just as dangerous. If you don't take great care in approaching them, you'll either be gutted by their horns or kicked by their hooves. To avoid provoking the grass-eating goats, NieR began picking herbs at a great distance. He heard that people tamed sheep and goats a long time ago, but he doubted its genuineness. It's nigh impossible to make them behave without resorting to magic, at least that's what he believed.

Speaking of which, he also heard that there was once a time when nights were pitch black. It was hard to believe, but if it was true, then Shades probably didn't exist back then. If the sun sank below the horizon and left the world in the dark, then the Shades could do as they wished. Humans would probably die out in the blink of an eye. The prospect of complete darkness arriving every day is a bit scary, but it must've been much easier to live in a world without Shades. But NieR stopped that line of thought. It's useless to think about how people lived before. It's not going to make their life any easier, and it's not going to make Yonah any better.

Having gathered a bagful of herbs and a whole basket of mushrooms, he looked down at his feet. He finished earlier than expected. There's still sometime before the evening arrives. The trees with Yonah's favorite red fruit were just a bit ahead. He had more than enough time to get them, but changed his mind and headed straight towards the eastern door. Let's go home soon, I want to be there for Yonah today. Somehow, that's what he thought.

3

"You were a bit too late. Yonah went back a few moments ago."

Popola smiled calmly while accepting the bag of herbs.

"I'll be happy to read her one more book, but a letter came, and..."

"It's fine. I'm sorry to impose on you when you're busy with your own work."

Popola's work includes many things. Although her main job was to manage the library, she often took care of business related to the villagers' life and death along with her sister Devola. Devola and Popola helped deliver many babies that were born in the villages around here and would bury the dead as well.

Being the knowledgeable person she is, Popola was also relied on by many of the village elders around. Whenever trouble stirred in their own villages, they would often send for Popola's knowledge by way of mail or a messenger.

"Yonah's cough is slightly different from her usual ones."

So, my fears were valid... but if Popola noticed it, then it'd be all right. Conflicting feelings of anxiety and relief stirred within NieR.

"That's why I didn't let her drink the medicine. It'd be better to wait and see."

"Then I'll have to tuck her in earlier."

Maybe it'd be better to have dinner earlier as well. Keep her bed warm, let her stay in bed for tomorrow... while NieR worked out plans in his head, Popola laughed lightly.

"With all the worrying you do; you'll end up on the bed yourself."

"But..."

"It's all right. You're doing fine."

Relief washed over him at hearing Popola's comment. Us siblings were indebted to these sisters more than anyone else in this village, he thought. After leaving the library, he delivered the mushrooms and took a pumpkin home. He'll make a boiled sweet pumpkin for dinner. Surely Yonah will be happy. With those thoughts occupying his mind, NieR looked up at the second-floor window. However, Yonah was nowhere to be seen. Usually, by the time NieR came back, she'd have attached herself to the window, looking out. He had a bad feeling about this.

"Yonah!"

Kicking open the door, he rushed into his house.

"Brother?"

Holding a chick in her hands, Yonah looked up at NieR with a blank face. Overcame with relief, NieR almost sat down on the spot. Yonah wasn't on the second floor because she was looking after the chick.

"What is it?"

"Nothing."

Just a few moments ago, images of Yonah fainting or stumbling from painful coughs tormented his mind. Now he just laughed at the absurdity of it all.

"He ate a lot!"

After patting the chick happily, she put the chick back to its cage. She took great care in handling it as if dealing with a broken object.

"Popola said that I don't need to drink the cough medicine.
Instead, I should sleep early in a warm bed. After that, um..."

That's how Yonah always was. Following NieR around after he came home, she'd talk about what she did during the day at great lengths, trying to make up for the time they spent apart. Relieved, NieR put down his bag. Listening to Yonah talk behind him, he lit a fire in the kitchen. Her words stopped abruptly, accompanied by a dry cough. It got worse after a few moments.

"You talk too much, Yonah. Don't push yourself too hard, stay quiet for a bit."

The moment NieR tried to turn around, he heard a retching sound. It seems like she coughed too much and ended up throwing up. He immediately tried to rush to her side but was frozen in place. Yonah's two hands covering her mouth were stained black. The oppressive stench was distinctly different from that of vomit. He later realized that it was the stench of blood.

"Bro... ther.... it... hurts..."

Yonah looked like she's about to cry. She tried to stand up but started coughing again. Black puddles of blood slipped between her fingertips and splashed onto the floor. They looked like they had a life of their own. An ominous term floated in his mind. The so-called black reaper—the Black Scrawl virus.

4

"Anyways, she should be okay for now."

Popola caught NieR's eye and motioned for them to leave the room. Devola, who stayed by Yonah's side, nodded. He can't quite remember what happened after that. He recalled Yonah saying that her back hurts, himself carrying her outside and meeting Devola, who told them to go back. When he came back to himself, Popola had already given Yonah some medicine, and Devola was helping him clean up the blood-stained bed. No, he really didn't do anything. Devola and Popola were the ones that took over.

When his father died, he still had his mother. When she died, he had Yonah. But what if Yonah died? He felt himself being drawn into a black hole and stopped thinking further.

"Why... why would Yonah..."

Coming down the stairs, he faced Popola alone, and couldn't stop himself from asking.

"She's still so young. Is it because I didn't take good care of her? Did she have bad food?"

"No. It's not because of you nor the food. The Black Scrawl is simply that kind of disease."

Even Popola couldn't figure out the cause for the much-feared Black Scrawl. It's not something transferred from animals to humans, nor a genetic disease transferred between parent and child. There's no relationship between health or living habits. A healthy person could easily get sick as well.

"Apparently the symptoms start out as coughs and fevers.
That's why it's so easily confused with normal flu."

"Did you know this?"

Maybe even Devola knew. After all, she told Yonah to go to Popola after hearing her coughs. And Popola didn't give her any medicine but told him to wait and see. Maybe they knew that the usual medicine won't take effect.

"I hoped that I was wrong. But we both saw victims of the Black Scrawl before, so..."

Popola's voice faded out to a whisper, and she cast her eyes downwards.

"What... will become of Yonah?"

He didn't ask how much time she had. NieR knew that the Black Scrawl is incurable, and will inevitably lead to death. Everyone feared this disease, so it's natural for everyone to have a passing knowledge of it.

"It differs from person to person, but the fever, the cough, and the pain will continue.
Yonah said her back hurts, but the pain actually comes from her bone.
Some people have leg pains, some have arm pains."

As the disease progresses, the pain will spread throughout the body. Eventually, the victim will be rendered motionless, and can only lie down and suffer. Also, coughing up blood will weaken their bodies significantly, and maybe speed up the symptoms.

"When black letters show up on their bodies, they won't have much longer to live..."

"Is there anything I can do?"

He knew that it was a foolish question. He knew, but couldn't stop himself from asking.

"If you give her some medicine, it could lessen her pains at least.
But there's nothing you can do to completely eradicate the disease."

"You could stop the pains at least, right? Then..."

He wouldn't want Yonah to suffer more than she has to. The least he could do was lessen her pain. But Popola shook her head slightly.

"The medicine that could ease the pain of the Black Scrawl has to be obtained from somewhere else. It's not like your standard cough or fever medicine where all the materials can be found around the village."

In other words, it was an expensive medication. NieR was the one who always picked up herbs for cough and fever medicines, so he simply got them from Popola whenever he needed them. However, it's not that simple with medicine that has to be gotten elsewhere.

"Still... if it's for Yonah."

Popola looked upon him sadly and spoke no more.

5

He'll do anything for Yonah. His feelings as a brother were completely truthful, but reality simply wasn't that nice. It's not like he didn't have savings. After his mother's death, he found a few of his father's letters along with a certain amount of money carefully kept. NieR didn't use them, wanting to save them for times of need. His mother probably thought the same thing and stored them. The amount isn't anything to be proud of, but it's reassuring nonetheless to know that he has a financial backup for emergencies. That's why, when he heard the expensive price for the medicine, he thought he could do something about it.

The medicine worked very well. Yonah still coughed and had light fevers, but the coughs caused by the Black Scrawl were never very serious to begin with. Compared to the coughs that made Yonah lose sleep whenever the seasons changed, this was nothing. As long as the pain is lessened, so is the burden on her body. But here comes the problem - she had to keep drinking the same medicine. If she stops, the pain returns full force. That's why he had to keep spending money to get a continuous supply of medicine for Yonah.
His savings quickly saw their bottom.

"Brother... you're going already?"

Yonah sleepily got up while rubbing her eyes. NieR tried to move around without making a sound, but Yonah probably sensed his presence and woke up.

"I'm picking some fern today, so I have to go out early. You can still sleep, Yonah."

"Are you going to the place with scary sheep?"

Yonah's expression darkened. Fern grew on the northern plains.
Home to not only Shades but also a plethora of wild sheep.

"Sorry. I'm sick, so you have to..."

"Don't worry."

Speaking over her words, NieR smiled at her.

"Your brother won't lose to pesky sheep. I got some of their meat last year, didn't I?"

He didn't exactly lie to reassure Yonah. He was stronger than he was last year and became faster as well. As long as he had a proper weapon, he could probably hunt down sheep.
Still, getting his hands on that proper weapon is going to prove to be a difficult task.

"Well, I'm off then."

Take care, Yonah tried to wave at him but was once again stopped by her coughs.

Before he headed into the plains, he went to the south gate. More than half of the villagers were asleep at this hour, and no one could be seen at shops or on the main street. Only his lone footsteps resounded through the quiet street. Soon, he heard the waterwheel turning and the squawking of hens. He was right in thinking that the hen-keeper's wife was gathering the eggs.

"Good morning."

NieR called out to her at a distance in fear of stepping onto any eggs hidden by the grass.

"Good morning, NieR. Up early today, huh?"

"Erm... if there's anything I can do..."

Even one extra job would count towards getting enough money for Yonah's medicine. That's how he got into the habit of asking villagers for a job.

"I'm sorry, but we have enough helpers right now. There's nothing I can ask of you."

The hen-keeper's wife said apologetically. In the first place, the couple only kept a few chickens that they could deal with. Grass and bugs couldn't feed that many chickens. If they increase in numbers, the couple would have to buy food specifically for them. They weren't prosperous enough to afford that.

"Oh, if something ever comes up in Seafront, please pick up a few seashells along the way."

"Seashells?"

"Apparently the hens lay better eggs if you feed them crushed seashells."

"I'll be sure to pick up some if I go there, but not now."

"Of course. I'm not in a rush, so just do it whenever you want."

Seafront is too far for just one job, and NieR didn't really like that place. He went there just once, but for him, that place held nothing but bad memories...

Picking up his pace, he once again went through the street full of shops and headed towards the northern gate. No sign of the villagers yet. There were usually two guards at the northern gate, but only one was present. As was his habit, NieR asked the guard for jobs, but the guard just shook his head.

"I'll ask everyone who passes by for jobs, so come by again sometime."

"Thank you."

"Don't expect too much."

His blunt statement was quite understandable. Everyone in this village is gentle, but at the same time, they're poor. In another city, the wheat and fish in this village may be treated as chicken feed and lures, but to this village, they're precious sources of food. Food wasn't the only thing they were lacking in. There's also a severe shortage of workforce. Nobody here had enough money to actually hire people. Even the comparatively rich people are stretching themselves thin just by paying for tailoring. Except for the shopkeepers and guards, all adult males had to go outside to work. NieR's father was once among them.

That's why the "jobs" the villagers gave to NieR were closer to charity. They were going out of their way to think of jobs that they can make NieR do in exchange for food or money. NieR knew that it'd be hard to get more money in this village. However, NieR is only fifteen, not old enough to be hired in other cities. He really wanted to grow up quicker. He wanted to earn enough money. If this keeps up, he might not even have enough for tomorrow's food... much less for Yonah's medicine.

He returned to the village after half a day spent picking up ferns in the plains. True to his word, the guard called out to people who passed by the northern gate, but no one needed NieR's help. He went to talk with Devola. Since she sang at the bar, she knew the ins and outs of the village quite well. Just like how people went to Popola for her knowledge, they went to Devola for someone to listen to their complaints and troubles. She should know if anyone wanted help. However, even Devola shook her head today.

"Hey, NieR. There's this old lady looking for a house. Her son is coming back with a wife or something."

"Devola, you mean..."

"If you sell your house, you should be able to get by for the moment.
There are a few spare rooms in the library, so there's plenty of space for you two to sleep in."

He never thought about selling his house. It's an old and small home, so he didn't know how much it'd sell for, but it could cover for Yonah's medicine cost. At least he didn't have to worry about not being able to buy her medicine anymore.

"Are you going to think about it?"

He knew that he should nod. There are barely any savings left. Selling his house and asking Popola to let them into one of her library rooms is the best choice. His brain understood that, but he couldn't bring himself to nod. Their house must've been a special place to Yonah, who spent most of her life at home due to her weak body. It's also the last thing connecting them to their mother. He sold all of his mother's clothing and personal belongings to cover medical costs. Nothing is left to remind them of her - except for the house itself. There's no way he could let go of that.

"Actually, I..."

NieR couldn't finish his sentence and merely cast his eyes downwards. But Devola understood.

"I see."

"I'm sorry. You told me this for my sake..."

"No worries. I kind of expected that answer from you anyway. I should be the one apologizing."

Pushing open the heavy doors, NieR left the bar. No jobs for today, and he still had no idea what to do for tomorrow. That line of thought depressed NieR. His bad mood only worsened on the way home when he saw a young mother pulling her children away, telling them to "not go there". He was aware that the mothers in the village forbid their children from playing near his house. They feared that their children will be infected with Yonah's Black Scrawl.

Of course, everyone in the village knew that the Black Scrawl wasn't contagious. That's why they never went out of their way to avoid NieR, and interacted with him as they normally would. However, the villagers were still nervous. What if the Black Scrawl is actually contagious, but only rarely so? Even if most people don't get infected, maybe some people do get infected. As long as they remained in the dark about its cause, nothing could be set in stone.

Dragging his feet over the pavement, NieR suddenly realized something. He forgot to water the fields before he left this morning. What little money he had, went into Yonah's medicine. He wanted to get by without buying food, and it should be possible with the fields his mother made when she was alive. Pulling out the wild grass and digging through the soil, he planted the small number of seeds he had gotten. Please let me make it, NieR prayed in his heart while running. He jumped over the broken fence with all his might, but immediately sunk down to his knees at the sight of his garden. The sprouts that just began to grow leaves were all withered. He heard that it's not easy to grow plants on this piece of ground, but never thought that everything would wither simply because he too forgot to water them once.

Now that he thought about it, his mother was ridiculously anxious about watering. Although she let NieR take care of the chickens, she forbade him to touch the fields. Even his mother had plenty of plants die on her before harvest. In the end, it was impossible for two children to live in this poor village alone. Maybe he really has to sell his house. There was nothing in his house that he could trade for money... Just as he believed himself to be on the brink of despair, a certain idea entered his mind. There's still something he could sell. Yes, one last thing.

He tried to stand up but failed. He felt like a heavy weight was placed on him. He has to get home quickly, make food for Yonah, prepare for tomorrow... he thought of tons and tons of things he had to do, but still, NieR could not move.

6

"Brother, where are you going today?"

Yonah looked up at him with worry in her eyes.
She probably realized that he was going far away by the way he moved.

"I'm going to Seafront to take care of some business."

Yonah silently gripped NieR's sleeve. Maybe she noticed something.

"Someone wanted me to pick up some seashells. Apparently, hens lay better eggs if you feed them that. She did say that it had to be crushed, but I wonder if chickens actually eat that."

That wasn't a lie. He was glad that he talked to the hen-keeper's wife yesterday. All of this is true. Still, Yonah didn't let go of his sleeve yet.

"That's all?"

"Of course not, there are other things as well.
It's not worth it if I'm only going there to pick up some seashells."

He lied just now. He wasn't asked to do anything else.

"The old lady in the flower shop asked me to buy some bulbs for her.
They only sell tulip bulbs in Seafront, you see."

Maybe he talked too much. Nevertheless, he couldn't stop. If he didn't keep lying, he wouldn't be able to hide it any longer, and Yonah would see through everything.

"There's also the man from the material store..."

"Will I be alone tonight?"

Relief washed over him as he looked upon Yonah who looked down. She didn't see through anything; she was just lonely. She probably remembered his absence half a year ago and became anxious. Seafront is far away. Moreover, he has to pass through the Shade infested southern plains, so he has to move while the sun is bright. It's impossible to make it back within the day no matter how much he rushed.

"I have lots of things to do, so I won't be able to come back immediately."

"You stayed home alone before, right? And you're much older than you were then."

He convinced her that staying home was a big help to him, and she finally let go of his sleeve. Turning his back on the worried Yonah, NieR closed the door behind him. He ran without looking back. He feared that if he stopped here, he wouldn't be able to proceed.

He ran till he was out of breath and stopped. By then he's lost the village behind him. He walked on and controlled his breathing. He needed to keep his stamina - the Shades are quick. If he doesn't spot them from a distance and run with all his might, he wouldn't be able to escape them. The southern plains, where huge Shades roam, is right in front of him. He knew which path to take and where to rest better than before, but somehow, his footsteps were a lot heavier than before.

The first time he went to Seafront to take care of business was half a year ago - to deliver an emergency letter to someone in the city, to buy tulip bulbs at the flower shop and natural rubber at the materials shop. Feeling anxious at leaving Yonah behind, he gradually put distance between him and the village. He saw the silhouette of a huge Shade from afar and ran with all his might across the plains. His first view of the ocean was beautiful, but he immediately shut his mouth against the smell of fish that prevailed over the whole city. While he walked around, both his hair and skin became disgustingly sticky. The lady at the flower shop told him it was due to the wind from the sea.

After buying the bulbs and materials, he walked into an area with huge houses. The paths were complicated, and the poor vision caused by the buildings only made it worse. He somehow delivered the letter, but he got lost on the way back. Is it due to the time? Or do people here not like walking outside to begin with? NieR couldn't find anyone to ask for directions. He had no idea where he walked and how he walked there, and was left with no choice. Tired from all the walking, he took a rest before the front door of an unknown household.

"What are you doing there?"

A voice called to him out of the blue, and NieR hurried away from the door.

"You're not one of the kids from around here. Are you lost?"

Maybe he'll point me in the right way, NieR was relieved. That's why he wasn't alert when the man opened the door and came out. Even when asked whether he was alone or not, he nodded honestly. The man smiled. NieR began to back off, but the man grabbed his arm, covered his mouth, and attempted to drag him inside his home. NieR tried to run but couldn't move—the man was strong.

"Don't you want money?"

He whispered into NieR's ear, giving him goosebumps.
NieR used all his strength and flung away the man's arm. The man laughed behind him.

"Come by whenever you want money."

He ran with all his might, hoping to escape that voice. He ran and ran, and he was out of Seafront before he even realized it. The man's voice still seemed to be following him, so NieR ran on.

Luckily, few villagers wanted things done in Seafront. Even if they did, they told him to do it at his convenience. Thanks to that, he forgot everything within the span of half a year - that unfortunate encounter, and the man's laughter.

However, here he was again. His footsteps naturally became heavier as Seafront loomed into his sight. He wished that he'd get lost again, that he'd never reached his destination. However, the house was close to the entrance. Ironically, he didn't get lost this time. Now that he looked at it, it was a grand house. The man was probably wealthy. Hearing that laughter in his ears again, his feet shook. If he stepped in, he wouldn't be able to go back. He realized that he was searching for excuses to go back. Just give up on it, it's okay now, you can't hope to bear anything more, a voice resounded within himself.

No. If he turns back now, what will happen to Yonah?

Yonah was his heart's support during these five years. When he thought of what food to make her for tomorrow, he could avert his eyes from the anxiety for the future. When he was busy looking after her, he could forget his mother's absence. The fact that he, as a child, was able to make it thus far is a testament to Yonah's importance.

"It's for Yonah."

When he spoke these words aloud, his heart was set. NieR pushed open the door silently.

7

Yonah was kept relatively healthy. With the pain lessened, she regained somewhat of an appetite and could feed the chickens in the garden or go to the library. The coughs continued, but luckily, she wasn't coughing up blood. Yonah felt nervous when NieR went to Seafront every few days but was otherwise content. That's why he thought this was good enough. Even when he felt something slowly breaking within himself to cover for Yonah's medicine costs.

He made Yonah regain her smile. Even now, he's protecting her like this. That's fine. As long as that holds true, he could forgive himself... NieR walked with those thoughts filling his head. He was tired. He wanted to sleep without thinking of anything. That was always the case when he came back from Seafront. When was it... that the way back became harder to bear than the way forward?

He felt someone calling his name and stopped. It was Devola. He reached the fountain without realizing it.

"What is it? Are you feeling bad?"

"I'm just thinking."

"That's fine then. Huh... you tied up your hair at the back."

"It... gets in the way."

He had gotten into the habit of tying up his hair despite giving it free roam before. Ever since then.

"I see. You're quite skilled, huh."

Devola said, impressed, and reached out to his hair. It was an innocent gesture. He knew that, he really did.

"NieR?"

He swatted away Devola's hand before he even realized it. The moment she touched his hair, memories of last night replayed themselves in his mind. Devola would probably scold him if he doesn't say anything, but he couldn't bring himself to speak. Ever since he frequented Seafront, he hated people touching his hair. Not only that - he couldn't stand his own hair touching his shoulders. He can't help but remember. How the man roughly grabbed his hair, and what he was forced into after that. He tried to forget, but those experiences seem to have been deeply engraved within his five senses, and would revive at the most inopportune times to torment NieR.

He thought about cutting his hair off, but he'd probably be asked about that. He didn't think he could respond properly, and he would definitely remember that man whenever asked. That's why he merely tied it up so that it doesn't touch his neck or shoulders.

"My bad, my bad. Nobody likes their hard work undone."

I'm sorry, the words that he was finally able to utter sounded alien to himself.

"Oh right."

Devola made to pluck her instrument's strings again, but remembered something at the last moment.

"Popola called for you. Go see her before you go home. And..."

"And?"

"Don't push yourself too hard."

NieR smiled noncommittally. Devola didn't know anything. She was probably just worried at his tired state. If she knew, she wouldn't care for him this much. She would probably look down on him as something filthy. He thought that Popola would say something similar, but he was wrong. Popola didn't ask him how he as, nor did she tell him to "not push himself".

"There's a job I want you to do."

He found salvation in her matter-of-fact tone. He preferred straightforwardness over worry and pity.

"But it's a very dangerous job. Should I even give this job to you...?"

Popola hesitated and cut off her words.

"What kind of job is it?"

"Shade slaying."

He thought of the huge black Shade he saw on the southern plains. He probably couldn't even stop its movements, much less defeat it. Still, the thought of rejecting this offer didn't even cross his mind.

"Of course, you're not alone in this.
There should be around three people coming from the cities around here."

Four people, including NieR. They're supposed to exterminate the Shade's den with just those numbers. There's a high possibility that the Shades in the northern plains come from there. Luckily, they're all small ones, and a normal person could probably exterminate them successfully, or so Popola said.

"You'll be going with adults, and the Shades aren't that strong, but..."

Popola seemed a lot more undecided than NieR was. As long as Shades are involved, his safety wasn't guaranteed. He must be prepared to be injured, and if he ran out of luck, he could die.

"But there's no way I could leave this alone, right?"

If the Shades in the northern plains increase, then the village would be endangered as well.

"I'll go. And I have to pay for Yonah's medicine anyways."

He doesn't mind the danger. As long as the job doesn't require him to go to Seafront.

"I'll leave it to you then. It's a dangerous job, but the pay is good."

NieR doubted his ears when he heard the amount. If he wanted to earn that much money, how many times would he have to drag himself to that man's house? How many times would he have to endure that kind of humiliation? He was shocked at the difference in value between the pay for Shade slaying and his own body.

"I'll do it. I don't care if it's dangerous or not."

"Please, do take care."

Popola's eyes weren't filled with sadness or pain, nor were they filled with pity or sympathy. They were filled with another kind of darkness. NieR realized it when he saw those eyes. Popola, and maybe even Devola knew. How he earned enough money to buy the expensive medicine, and the price he had to pay. They knew, and that's why he was referred to a high paying job despite its dangers... The moment his secrets were revealed, his face was burning with shame. At the same time, he was thankful for Devola and Popola who treated him no differently. Why did he even think that he would be looked down upon? There's no way that they would do it.

"Thank you, Popola."

However, the darkness in Popola's eyes did not disappear.

8

The rendezvous point was at the northern gate. Not many people dally around in this village, so NieR knew that the two men were hired for the same job as he was. However, they never expected to be accompanied by such a young boy. They frowned when they saw NieR, and told him to go back.

"Kids like you should get the hell outta here. We're not here for fun, y'know."

"I know. So..."

"Get out. I'm not gonna sleep well if a random kid dies in front of me."

How could he convince them to let him go with them? He didn't want to lose this opportune job. When NieR tried to stand his ground, a voice resounded.

"The hell are you guys arguing about?"

He knew this voice, but it's one that he didn't want to remember. He knew who it was without even turning around for confirmation.

"Why are you here? Oh, you're from this village, huh."

It's the man from Seafront. NieR's questions about his presence were answered the moment he saw the man's sword. Many swords were on display in his house. He bought them all for collecting purposes, and all of them told of murder. People who have twisted sexual preferences have eccentric collections as well. The two men seemed to know the man from Seafront. NieR could tell from their conversation that they often met each other on jobs like these. The man probably took on Shade slaying jobs for a chance to put his collections to practice.

"You know this kid?"

"Ah, I know him very well. Right?"

The man from Seafront smiled meaningfully at NieR.

"This kid won't be a burden.
He's strong enough to fling away a grown man, and not that shabby in speed either."

He was talking about their first meeting.
NieR turned his face away, but the man still looked upon him out of interest.

"Don't be fooled by his womanly face. He's quite stubborn... very good endurance as well."

NieR's hands and feet froze out of their own accord. He couldn't even fling away the hand placed on his shoulder.

"He might be surprisingly useful.
Well, I'm also quite interested in seeing him cry in fear at the sight of Shades."

"If you say so... I guess we could take him along."

His hatred of that man could not be put into words. However, it was thanks to his words that NieR was able to keep his job. How humiliating. It's for Yonah's sake, everything is to protect her... He gripped his fists tightly and repeated the mantra in his heart. He felt a pressure at the back of his head.

"What's with that stare, huh?"

No, it wasn't even strong enough to be called pressure, but NieR couldn't move.

"Don't think of trying anything funny. I taught you that, didn't I?"

The man whispered in a deep voice that the other two couldn't hope to catch. His voice and breath flowed into NieR's ears like poison. NieR clenched his mouth tightly. The man's fingers were intertwined in NieR's tied up hair. They pulled, and his hair fell loose. The man left while laughing.

NieR wanted to retie his hair as soon as possible, but he couldn't do it. As he picked up the fallen hair tie, he realized that his hands were shaking uncontrollably. The Shade's nest was near the mountain ranges in the plains. He knew that the twisting narrow paths led to a cave. It's not far-fetched for sunlight fearing Shades to take up residence there.

As they came close to entering the mountain paths, his hands tightened with anxiety. This was the first time he held a sword since he went hunting for sheep with the village adults. Back then, he held a blunt sword to bludgeon the animals, but it's different this time. Popola lent him an old sword from the library's storage room for this job. NieR didn't know what a sword looked like after cutting humans, but the moment he saw the darkly lit blade, he instinctively knew that it shed blood once. Despite being such a dangerous weapon, the sword felt natural in his hands. Almost as if it was waiting for him to pick it up.

"The wind feels strangely wet."

The man in the front turned his head. Now that he mentioned it, the air's coldness and heaviness seem to foreshadow rain. However, the sky above is blue and unobstructed by any clouds.

"Let's get this over quickly and go back. We'll be in trouble if it rains."

There's still some distance before the cave. They increased their pace. Though there were no clouds, the weather could still change without warning. However, they thought wrong. What became worse wasn't the weather, but their vision.

"Fog?!"

The wet wind seemed to be the harbinger of fog. Before they even realized it, the fog thickened until they couldn't see the sky's color anymore.

"What do we do now? Go back for now and come back later?"

"The fog's not gonna matter if we're in the cave."

Let's just go, the man began. A few black shadows appeared on the other side of the mist.

"Shades!"

When they turned around, black shadows were closing in from the back. They were surrounded.

"I see! They weren't just living in the caves! This whole area is their nest!"

The Shades weren't confined to the caves, they could move anywhere as long as the sunlight was dim. The sun doesn't shine that long on the mountain ranges to begin with. Narrow paths and frequent fogs provided great living conditions for the Shades. They're coming! a voice shouted. The black shadows were right before his eyes. NieR swung down the sword he held. What he felt through the blade was blunt and heavy. He felt like he was killing a sheep - the moment he thought that he saw crimson. He was showered in a warm fluid—it was blood. It stunk the same way as the black blood that Yonah coughed up. The first time he saw the Shade's blood, NieR hesitated. Though the Shades look like mere shadows, cutting them feels like cutting animals, and they bleed crimson. However, they don't leave a corpse when defeated. The Shades he slew became black mists and lost their shape - only a pile of crimson black blood remained.

What are Shades?

His question was quickly filed into the back of his mind. Now's not the time for that. What the Shades lacked in size, they made up for in number. He couldn't afford to think. He swung his sword as if in a trance and repeatedly bathed in their shed blood. No matter how many he killed, black shadows kept appearing from the fog. Their silhouette strangely resembled that of a human. They have a head, they have limbs, they move while standing upright... After some time, he couldn't tell whether he was killing humans or not. Maybe he hasn't been killing Shades, but humans all along? Is this sticky crimson fluid human blood? He saw familiar clothing in front of him. It was the man from Seafront. He was too focused on testing out his favorite sword, and took no heed of NieR's presence. He saw the man's thin smile. His head was repeatedly showered in blood - he resembled a monster more than a human.

Maybe he himself had the same expression. He must've been killing these Shades wearing the same expression as this man. Somewhere in his heart, he enjoyed slaughter. Three, four... he must've been proud of

himself for killing all these Shades. Who are the real monsters? The Shades? Or themselves? The fog thickened.

He had no idea how many Shades he slew. His head was still numb, and he couldn't think straight. But he was confident that he took out most of them in this area. NieR breathed deeply, and went back the way he came. He didn't suffer any major injuries, but scratches and bruises couldn't be avoided. A numb pain filled his entire body. The Shades' shed blood on his hands and feet dried up, and he felt strange whenever his movements tore into the blood. Maybe his sense of smell got used to it, but he must be stinking to the untrained nose. Anyways, he had to wash soon. He didn't have enough stamina left to run, but he tried to walk as fast as he could.

Eventually, the fog dissipated from his vision, and he caught up with the two men. They're the two who tried to chase NieR back in the northern gate. One of them was dragging his feet, and the other's left arm was bent at a weird angle. I must've been extremely lucky to get away with only these injuries, NieR thought after looking at them. When they saw NieR, the two men widened their eyes.
They probably thought that the Shades had killed him.

"You're alive!"

NieR silently nodded.

"It's just as he said, huh. You're far from a burden - heck, you're the liveliest out of all of us."

I'm impressed, the man began, but changed his expression when he remembers something.

"What happened to him? Wasn't he with you?"

This time NieR shook his head.

"True. We never thought that there'd be that many. It's a miracle that we even survived."

The man sighed and apologized to NieR.

"We really shouldn't have brought you along. It must've been hard on a child."

"No..."

With this, he could buy the medicine. Yonah would be released from her suffering.

"It's for my sister, so."

Yes, he would do anything for Yonah. Anything. No matter how great the danger, or how dirty its nature.

"I see. Well, I'm glad that you're fine."

The man with his left arm injured patted NieR on his back with his right arm, and said: "Let's go back". Carrying the man with a leg injury on his back, NieR walked silently for a while. They walked through the mountain paths and crossed the northern plains on high alert. They can't afford to be attacked here, but luckily the sky was clear, and no Shades could be seen on the plains. NieR recalled the huge Shade he saw in the southern plains. It had limbs and stood on its hind-legs as well.

"I never thought that humans and Shades were so alike..."

He called them "black monsters" when he was small. When he first saw the real thing, he thought that they were like shadows. But he never thought of them in connection to humans.

"Really? Are they that alike?"

The two men tilted their heads.

"They bleed when you cut them, and they feel the same..."

"Then the same applies to sheep and goats. They bleed, and they feel like Shades when you cut them."

What a weird kid, the two men laughed. It seems like they never thought about the difference between Shades and humans.

"Well, if you actually kill a human, it might feel different from a Shade or a sheep. But you can't just put it into practice."

"Put it into practice..."

He looked upon his blood-stained hands. His palms dried in a dark crimson color. A color ambiguous about its nature, human blood, or Shade blood. The man from Seafront was dead. He didn't have to go to his house ever again.

"What's wrong? You're hurting somewhere?"

NieR came back to himself after hearing the worried tone. NieR brought his eyes away from his hands and shook his head.

"Just thinking that I have to go home quickly."

The image of Yonah waiting by the second-floor window floated in his mind. She'll probably greet him with a smile today, just like all other days. He doesn't have to think any more than that. Nothing more than protecting Yonah. Such a simple thing... He felt something being lifted from his shoulders and looked up at the sky. Within the same vast expanse of blue, a single cloud drifted along, carried by the wind.



YOKO FACT 9 - From Famitsu Developer Interview (translated by Defade)
http://www.famitsu.com/game/news/1235592_1124.html

> Yoko Taro thought one comment on NieR (that it was 'an ugly puppy') described the game perfectly. It's full of flaws and sometimes you just can't bear to look at it, but there's a certain charm about it that you just can't let go of.

YOKO FACT 10 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

NieR's secret past: there was actually more...!!

Eishima: Ever since I took the job for writing short stories, I learned a lot about the settings and worldview of the game from Yoko aside from doing test plays of the game. Every time I saw the contents of my mail, I froze before my computer and shouted "Ehhh-!?"

Yoko: Me, scenario writers Kikuchi and Natori decided that NieR couldn't possibly survive without earning money like that. So, the setting was pretty normal, wasn't it?

Natori: Yes. It was normal. (smiles)

Eishima: T-true....it...might be common? However, that's still too much for a game setting to be published officially in a normal game magazine. The first setting I got from Yoko said: "He earned money by being their partner for the night, no matter the gender" ... And Yoko's description of it was horrible.

Yoko: Eh, no it wasn't!? It was just him looking at the ceiling and waiting for unpleasant times to end, and finding it a bit hard to sit down the next day...

Eishima: That's exactly it! It was indirect, but still too direct! (laughs) In the end, we managed to tone it down considerably by agreeing on NieR tying up his hair after that night.

You could've included those "direct" parts in this book.

Eishima: I probably wouldn't be able to hold myself back...in different manners of speaking, so I refrained from doing that. (laughs)

Since Gestalts are souls, why do the Shades bleed?

Yoko: Gestalts don't possess a physical body or cells, but the instant they get hurt, their wounds temporarily try to return to their human state. That's why they bleed and can die like normal humans.

YOKO FACT 11 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

"Grimoire Weiss" and "Grimoire Noir" a set of programs to finish the project

They appeared in the SS "And then there were none", but what exactly were "Grimoire Weiss" and "Grimoire Noir", which gained immense magic through Gestalts being sealed in them?

Yoko: If Grimoire Noir is activated, all Gestalts can be returned to their Replicants (changing from a world of Replicants to a world of humans). It's a program that utilizes magic. The keys that are vital to its activation is Grimoire Weiss and "the sealed verses". The sealed verses are offensive magic in expectation of legion battles. Grimoire Weiss is necessary for Grimoire Noir's activation, and the sealed verses in turn are vital for Grimoire Weiss's. In other words, it's a double lock intended to prevent any accidental activation of the system, so that they'll only be activated by the manager when the time has truly come.

When the time has come?

Yoko: When the legions have been exterminated, and when the WCS has ceased. However, the Shadowlord Gestalt NieR realized that he was being lied to.

Yonah's relapse wasn't getting cured at all, and he's just one-sidedly providing the demonic element.

Yoko: He's irritated at the lack of change, and tried to use force to gain Yonah and NieR's replicants, as well as Grimoire Weiss. The very roots of the system are impacted, and though the time hasn't come yet, Devola and Popola tried to return the Replicant's bodies to their original owners before everything is too late...however, Grimoire Weiss lost his memories, and took Replicant NieR's side. Moreover, the replicants gained sentience. The twins tried to make amends to the plans and control the Shadowlord as best as they could, but since Replicant NieR's own will was involved as well, nothing really went according to plan. That is the basic plot of "NieR".

I became really confused as I was listening to all that.

Yoko: That's right. We became confused when we were thinking of all that. (laughs) But I didn't think this information necessary to the enjoyment of the game. These settings don't really matter.

They're unrelated to the player or NieR in that matter. That's true.

Yoko: Many things are going on in the world, but NieR simply fought against Shades to protect Yonah – that's what I wanted to portray, and it's pretty similar to our world. You don't know why exactly everything boiled down to this in history's long span, but somehow people were at war for all sorts of reasons since you were born – something like that.

We barely explained "Project Gestalt" in the game, because that's just how reality is. I wanted to reflect certain elements of reality in this game, so I didn't put too much focus on explaining everything. I also wanted to make the basic story simple and easy to understand, so I deleted most information that wasn't vital to emotional impact.



A Little Princess

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It takes place 2 years before the events in-game and tells a little bit of background story for Fyra.

This English version was brought to you by Defade.

A closed heart. Myself, sealed within. Rules are exchanged, and friendships crafted.
Occasionally, Fyra would stare at the mask held in her hands.

It was a weird mask, and she didn't know what it represented. But she could feel the warmth.

"You'll have to live with that mask on. You're not allowed to take it off."

The man that took her to this town left with these parting words. He didn't elaborate on the mask's meaning or explain anything about her future. Fyra gently touched the right side of her face, her fingers brushing over blotches of reddish tumors, some of them oozing pus. These keloids were a testament to the burns she suffered before she was old enough to understand. The numerous keloids would disgust most by just being seen, much less touched, but to Fyra they were a strange source of comfort. Perhaps she felt that it was part of her that had to be accepted.

Of course, to her parents, her keloids were an abomination. As prosperous wholesale dealers of fabric who were used to ordering people around and doing business, they were prideful people who felt insulted at the very concept of caring for their daughter, so sympathy was out of the question.

"You're going to be in the way of our business," her parents claimed and forbid her from going outside. On the night of her 8th birthday, they demanded her to go work in a faraway town – so that they could get rid of an eyesore. As such, an 8-year-old Fyra was taken by her caretaker through the desert and into this distant town. She probably couldn't go back to her homeland anymore. She had no one to protect her. Fyra prepared herself – she's willing to do anything to survive alone.

Fyra put on her mask with vigor. The inside of the mask was cold, silent, and dark. The world she saw through the eyeholes was narrow. From the eyeholes, she saw a similar mask close upon her. She unwittingly took a step back, but the figure took her arm and dragged her away, rattling off about something at the same time. Judging from the figure's strength and voice, it had to be an adult male, but she couldn't really tell from the mask. Moreover, she couldn't understand the language she heard.

"Ah. Um, please wait."

Fyra blurted out, and the man stilled at her words. The next moment, he yelled at her, full of anger. He swung his hands up and down, and stamped his feet in frustration. His figure called to mind the image of her own father, drowning in maddening anger at being "looked down upon" due to his daughter. I'll be beaten! Fyra hurriedly covered her face, and tensed her body. At that moment, a dignified voice rang out.

"Rule 32: Those without land identification shall not speak."

It was a bit rough around the edges, but the language was one that Fyra knew well. Who? Looking around, she spotted a child with his hands around his waist, standing on the top of the maze-like stairs. He hopped down the stairs. He had a mask as well – it seemed like a tradition to live here wearing masks. He seemed about the same age as me. Fyra did not realize that she was staring, and the masked child shook his body in an irritated manner, talking to her.

"You. You're not born here, right? You don't have a land identification, right?"

"Land identifica...?"

Fyra began talking, but quickly covered her mouth.

> "Land identifications are like certificates that record where you're born in this town. All the residents have them. But outsiders don't. If they really want to speak or sing, they have to marry someone of this town and get a land identification. This town's rules are absolute.
> If you want to live here, then you follow them."

Outsiders can't speak? Then how should I live in this town? Fyra's unease was evident even through the mask. The masked child came near her ear,

> "Leave it to me."

Leaving those whispered words, the boy walked towards the man, and spoke in a language that Fyra could not understand. Both the language itself and their body gestures are too peculiar, and Fyra couldn't tell what they're talking about. In the middle of it, the boy lifted his mask slowly and gave her a glimpse of his face. It was but a moment, but Fyra saw it. His skin was smooth and brown, and his shapely nose simply served to accentuate his good looks. His straight hair wavered in the wind. I didn't know that such a beautiful boy existed in this world. Fyra was in shock and could not draw her eyes away. The boy eventually turned around and called out to her in a lively voice. "Come!"

The boy brought his arms before him and stuck up his chest, telling something to the man in the native language. Seeing the man nod, he looked to Fyra again and spoke up.

> "I heard from him. You came here to work, no? He is your boss. You take fruits from him, and sell in this town. The money, you give to him. Fruit selling. Can you do it?"

Fyra quickly nodded. The boy took a huge basket from the man, and handed it to Fyra, telling her to do her best. She could now live in this town, thanks to the boy conversing with the boss. Thank you. Though irritated that she could not put her feelings of gratitude in words, Fyra bowed deeply before the boy.

Six months passed by in the blink of an eye. Fyra lived as if in a trance. In the world of business, where verbal skills are more important than anything, Fyra found her lack of speech due to not possessing a land identification a much bigger handicap than expected. However, she did not give up. To make up for her silence, she spent thrice the time walking around the town, running up and down the various tiny stairs, and walked the town corner to corner. She was almost killed in a conflict between other sellers, but no matter how much she was beaten or kicked, she protected the fruits in her basket. On rainy days, windy days, days where her face felt aflame, days where she could barely walk due to fever, Fyra always carried a basket of fruits into town.

She had no time to become depressed or anxious, and during her days of continuous work, she began to understand pretty much all of the town's language even though they were meaningless sounds lined up after each other at first. She could remember most of the town's rules, but certainly not all of them due to the sheer number of rules, so she always carried a rulebook with her to avoid trouble.

There were days where she could barely make any money, but Fyra enjoyed living in this city. She felt much worse in her hometown, being always locked in her house due to being "the shame of the family."

This town is bound by rules. However, there's nothing but rules restricting it. Though she won't be protected because "she's a child" or "she's a girl," she wasn't discriminated against either. Everyone wore masks in the town, so she wasn't treated extra nicely or badly due to her appearance. There is no measure to how happy this fact had made Fyra. Her heart has suffered much from the insensitive gazes and words due to her keloids, but those wounds now dispersed like the sands flowing in this town's waterways.

She sometimes met the boy she owed much to. Fyra moved about a rather wide area doing business, but the boy himself comes and goes most unexpectedly. Fyra could only recognize him because he often shifted his mask a little, revealing his face.

"Rule 2: You have to wear masks."

Despite breaking a rule that constitutes the major premise of the town, he lived rather indifferent to the fact. And he'd sometimes come to talk to Fyra, who always held a disproportionately large fruit basket, selling the fruits as she walked around.

"Why are you always walking while looking down? You could stick out your chest more.
Even the fruits will look better that way."

"It's the first time I've seen someone walking around with a rule book.
You don't need to take it that seriously."

The boy's words no longer had a rough edge to it. Ever since Fyra learned the town's language, he began communicating with her in such. It's rather fitting for a boy who had no idea that my language being spoken fluently is much worse for me, Fyra thought.

One evening, Fyra handed today's money over like usual and got a small portion of that in return. She was about to go back when her boss stopped her with his heavy voice.

"Sell all the fruits in the basket tomorrow. If you can't do that, then I have no need for you."

That's hard. Within these six months, there wasn't a single day when Fyra managed to sell all the fruits. However, Fyra gritted her teeth at "no need for you", and nodded. I have to do this. To survive in this town, to be needed, I must do this. I'm prepared for this.

The next morning, Fyra went into the town before the dawn even broke. Whenever she saw people, she'd latch onto them stubbornly and promote the fruits to the best of her ability with body language and hand swings. She chased after those who rejected the offer, and stood up again even when cruelly tossed aside. However, her efforts backfired, and not a single fruit was sold even when the sun rose.

When the sunlight became too much to bear, there would be fewer people outside. Fyra traversed many sets of labyrinth-like stairs just to find buyers. She arrived at the plaza. She held great expectations for one moment, but no one was found. Fyra sighed and began to retrace her steps, but stumbled on the stone pavement. Her stamina was at its limit from anxiety and fatigue, and Fyra's tiny body fell down. Even though her limited vision behind the mask, she saw the fruits scattering in all directions. Fyra suddenly knew that this is it for her. She didn't think so, she knew. She saw her destiny that refused to be altered through willpower alone. She didn't even have the strength to stand up anymore.

How long was she like that? A lively voice abruptly barged onto her consciousness.

"Rule 227: Actions that obstruct public walkways are forbidden."

Fyra hurriedly tried to stand up, and saw the boy looking down at her with hands on hips. His mask was shifted today as well.

"...that's what they say, but nobody's going to come this way.
Sleep if you're tired, but find a place in the shades at least."

Fyra shook her head and stood up. She held the basket, and the boy began gathering the fruits with much vigor. Looking at the fruits in the basket, Fyra fell into despair again. All the fruits were dirty and broken from rolling around. They couldn't possibly be sold.

"What's wrong?"

The boy asked, staring straight at her with clear eyes, and Fyra blushed behind her mask. Her heart fluttered. She thought that he could be told of her predicament at least. She wanted to tell him. Seeing Fyra explaining by moving her body and hands, the boy immediately understood and said:

"I see! So that's it!" in an almost whistling tone. He pointed towards the fruits.

"Then I'll buy them. All of those fruits in the basket!"

Fyra glared at the boy. Don't joke around at a time like this! Instead of saying it aloud, she took out her rule book and showed it to the boy.

"Rule 429: It is forbidden to buy all goods in a shop."

"...as usual, you're so obedient! Don't mind the rules. They are made to be broken.
You'd rather break a few rules and live instead of obeying them and dying, right?"

Fyra forgot her anger in the face of such a self-centered comment, and was merely confused. The boy was amused and laughed.

"Well, whatever. Just for someone as well-behaved as you, I won't break the rules this time, I'll just go around them. I'll make two lots. If I draw the winning one, I'll get fruits from you and give you money. It's not 'buying.' It's just trading according to the rules of the game. Are you okay with that?"

Seeing Fyra's hesitation, the boy stood up straighter.

"It's okay! I never lose in a match, you see. Believe me."

The boy was right in the end. He drew the winning lot, and taking all the fruit in his arms, he fished out a huge sum of money from his pocket and showed them into Fyra's hands without even counting.

"I think this should be enough."

Fyra hurriedly tried to give him change, but he stopped her and smiled.

"Let's play again."

Fyra nodded and saw the boy walk away. She picked up the lots scattered on the ground – maybe the boy dropped them since his attention is focused on the fruits. They were both winning lots.

When Fyra returned and lowered the empty basket on the floor, her boss was quite surprised. When Fyra told him the truth, he became even more surprised. He sighed deeply.

"The prince's whims are always troubling."

The prince? Fyra leaned her head to the side.

"What, you didn't know?"

The boss looked shocked, and told her that the boy that appeared in front of Fyra occasionally was none other than the prince of Façade.

"When the prince gets bored, he'd run out the palace into the streets. He's always looking around for some interesting games to play. He breaks the rules, gets involved in games, and always causes trouble for the citizens... still, even though he always causes trouble,
we can't really bring ourselves to hate him."

The boss spoke of the prince in a gentle tone rarely used, and revealed a game about Fyra that the prince has been playing with him.

"The prince made a bet with me – how good a seller could a tiny outsider like you become in six months. If you could sell all the fruits in the basket within one day, then I win. If you can't, the prince wins, and you'll be exiled from this town... at least that's how it was supposed to go."

Why would the prince, who hates losing, do something that led to his defeat? The boss' whisperings did not reach Fyra's ears, she already threw the basket to the ground and turned around.

"Let's play again."

The boy's—no, prince's—words resounded in her head. The six months I've spent desperately trying to survive was nothing but a game to him. I was merely his pawn. The wind blew sand into her eyes. Tears flowed one after each other. She was regretful. She was sad. And she could not forgive herself for getting close to him for even one moment.

After arriving in front of the palace, Fyra shouted. She broke the rules with a lonely voice that did not constitute words. The guards immediately seized her, but a pair of familiar legs appeared in front of her.

> "Let her go. She's my guest."

His voice has not changed. However, it seemed a bit heavier. I see, so he really is a prince. Fyra's shoulders were shaking even when pushed against the ground. It was so out of place; it was sad. The prince seemed confused in the face of Fyra's strange behavior. "Leave us alone," he said and chased the guards away, then he pulled Fyra up.

> "So, you've finally found out, huh."

The prince shrugged and did not even show a shred of guilt. Fyra stood in front of the prince unflinchingly and threw away her own mask. She stared straight at the prince. She wanted to make herself clear with her real face, with her real self. Seeing the tears flowing from Fyra's eyes, the prince panicked.

> "W-what happened?" He asked in a high-pitched voice.

Fyra let herself go and told him everything. The first words she spoke in a long time were not her homeland's words, but those of the town.

> "I walk with my eyes downcast because it's become a habit after trying to hide my ugly face for so long."

> "The rule book is a place for me to belong in this unfamiliar town."

> "Even if it's just boredom relief for you, it's life for me. No matter how merciless it may be, it's my irreplaceable life. If you think that you can play with your people's lives just because you're a prince, then you have another thing coming. Please apologize.
> And please, don't ever get involved with me again."

Ah, what did I do? I said such rude things in front of the prince, and broke so many of the rules. I won't be able to stay in this town anymore. I'm such an idiot. And I even swore to abandon myself if that's what it takes to survive. Fyra hung her head in preparation of punishment, but a loud voice came from above.

> "I'm sorry!"

Fyra raised her head bit by bit, and stared at the "prince" lowering his head in front of her with unbelief.

> "It's true that I thought of it as a game first, and I did make a bet with the boss. But I forgot about that right away – because your way of living was just that beautiful. What I did today… I did because I really wanted to help you. I'd be troubled if you were gone from this town… believe me."

The prince fidgeted and stared at his toes, but eventually raised his head and said,

> "I didn't help you out of playfulness or pity, but out of friendship."

Friendship! Fyra did not know what to take that word for, and unconsciously reached for her keloids. Seeing her behavior, the prince only asked: "You touch that out of habit?" He did not turn away from the keloids. His face showed that he thought nothing of them. He tilted his head and asked, "Hey, will you be my friend?"

Fyra found the prince's obviously forced attitude so out of place, and held back a laugh. The prince saw this and instantly brightened considerably.

> "You will, right?"

> "Rule 12030: Citizens could not end a relationship desired by royalty."

Fyra opened the rulebook and showed it to the prince, whose shoulders slumped.

> "You could… break the rules."

Fyra found his sulky tone adorable and laughed again. It's true that the prince broke a rule for her.

> "Rule 89: Royalty cannot apologize to the citizens."

The prince recognized me as his "friend" even though I'm an outsider, I'll trust in him once more, Fyra thought. She wanted to trust him, as his subject, as his friend. The prince realized that Fyra completely forgave him, and immediately lunged forward, asking "What do you want to play?"

"Oh, I know! What about this game? From tomorrow onwards, you'll bring your fruits to the palace every day. If you bring the fruits that I like, then you win. I'll pay twice the price. If you bring the ones that I don't like, you lose. I'll have you dance to one song." Only then did the prince noticed that Fyra was staring at him. He looked away awkwardly and asked her hesitatingly.

"Ah... erm, you don't want... games?"

Geez, what a prince. Fyra exaggerated her sigh.

I thought that I would always live by myself. I thought I was fine with that. I'll show them that I can live just fine alone. But having a friend might just add another kind of fun to it. If I had a friend that would look at my real self... surely, I'll look at each day in a different light.

I accept that challenge!

Fyra stood up straight and promised to play with the prince.



YOKO FACT 12

NieR's questionable morality arises from the 9/11 events, or more precisely the War on Terror that followed the attack. The military operations in the Middle East shook Yoko's intuition on mass murder; he was convinced that only someone insane could slaughter hundreds or even thousands of people (that was his point on view for Drakengard after all). This war made him realize that as long as you are convinced of the righteousness of your actions, anything can be thought as acceptable. That why NieR, from its very beginning, was developed to show multiple perspectives and make the player question the morality of his actions.



Witches' Sabbath

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It takes probably not too long before NieR and Kainé “first” encounter.

This English version was brought to you by Kho-dazat.

Feel fear and terror, from the demon-possessed remains.
Praise and worship, the karma of overlapping yin and yang.

I first heard tell of her in a town I visited toward the end of my pilgrimage.

This town, shielded from the sunlight in a cloak of white mist, was no stranger to attacks by Shades. The denizens all lived in fortified, tank-like dwellings. The way in which the town was built reminded me of a giant spider's nest, the houses eggs. As I do in all the towns I visit, I gathered the young people in the square to deliver a sermon on the virtues of tolerance and peace. Just as I was commending them for their bravery in facing each day under the threat of Shades, one of the youths stood up, scowling.

> "You don't understand anything. Listen, it isn't the Shades we're afraid of.
> There's a worse monster lurking here... that damn Shade-possessed woman."

As those words left the young man's lips, everyone gathered let out sighs and soon an oppressive silence descended upon us. When I became flustered by this, the young man, called Dimo, laugh sarcastically, his tone turning more derisive.

> "Do you feel like preaching the value of tolerance to someone like that? Eh, little miss do-gooder?"

I'm used to people regarding me with jaundiced eyes for being both of educated mind and attractive build. My ideals of a truly tolerant world may not mean much to the ear of one uneducated and living hand-to-mouth, I realize. I've been sneered and belittled throughout my journey by many unenlightened people, but because I realize their ignorance, I can find it within myself to forgive them. At such times, I only smile at them. I never give into hate or fear. I just continue to try and deliver those less fortunate than I, such as this Dimo.

> "I hear the mere touch of a Shade upon the skin causes pain worse than death. I have never met anyone possessed by a Shade before, but their suffering must be unimaginable. It brings a tear to my eye to think of it. I can hardly understand how you could treat her with such disdain."

When I finished speaking, I was met by a dozen hollow stares.

Having learned of the prejudice against this person, I traveled door-to-door, aggressively collecting information about her. Some of the villagers refused to speak of her as if she were cursed, but most were more than happy to discuss—and in the process, slander—her.

Apparently, she became possessed the very same day she lost her one relative, her grandmother. Consumed by grief and loneliness, they say she had relations with a Shade, which caused half her body to take on an inhuman shape. She now kills Shades and men alike to devour their corpses. On the days she is not killing, she tempts men... as I listened to these obviously fabricated rumors, I felt my sympathy for this woman growing. My desire to shield her from discrimination was sincere. When I said I wished to speak with her, the villagers appraised me suspiciously. Not disheartened, however, I ended up paying Dimo a fair bit of coin to lead me to where she lived.

> "Paying good money to go gawk at a half-Shade... some moral pillar you are, huh?
> Wouldn't it be easier to just go to a freak show?"

Not letting his words get to me, I held my head high. Soon enough I would have the opportunity to deliver that poor and sorry soul. Around the time the mist began to mask my view of the town in the distance, we came upon an open clearing. Within it, one of the tank-like buildings I saw in town stood half-collapsed. Its outside walls were red with rust and cracking, full of enormous holes.

"This is it." Said Dimo, but I could hardly believe anyone could live in such a place.

I rushed toward the house and called out, but got no answer. No one was inside. Peeking in, I caught sight of a ring of lovely flowers and what looked like a children's drawing scrawled in colorful crayon hanging up on the wall. Feeling deeply reassured, I turned to Dimo full of confidence.

"Look there. Her heart is human enough to value beauty. I have no doubt she is as human as you or I."

The moment I'd said that, I heard many footsteps. The atmosphere became unsettled, and I saw Dimo's face pale as the scent of something rancid met our nostrils.

"Damn! Must be Shades-"

Before he could finish speaking, before my eyes a geyser of blood had erupted from Dimo's side. It sprayed over me like rain. A Shade emerged from the thicket; its body encircled what looked like gold-colored rings. The only reason I could not let out a shriek at the sight of its ghastly form was thanks to the rain of blood having already dulled my senses. Joined by three or four more, the Shades circled me, inching closer gradually. With each step their feet made a wet, hateful sound upon the grass. The mist, grown thick, choked me and my nose was assaulted by the smell of decay.

Would the Shades kill me, or would I suffocate first? As I pondered my fate in some far away section of my wavering consciousness, my attention was caught by a glimmer in the corner of my eye. The next thing I heard was a roar of wind and the sounds of soft meat being sliced. It hadn't taken a second. Before I could even blink the Shades, still screaming, have been cut into pieces. Rubbing my eyes, I saw a woman standing with two large swords in either hand. She was wearing a tawdry costume that exposed her shapely form to the elements. She wore a smile on her face that seemed to extend from ear to ear.

"How the hell did you like that, huh, you goddamn shit eaters?!
I'm not going to stop chopping until I've diced you into a fine fucking mist!"

I could hardly believe the words that were spilling happily from her open mouth. Her sharp eyes seemed to burn red, and her clothes, wet with blood, glistened as they clung suggestively to her body. This was… this was the poor soul who had been possessed by a Shade? Forgetting the fear, I'd held for my life, I stood agape, staring at this woman who could not be further from the image I had of her. It wasn't until she had made good on her words and the last Shade stopped screaming that I registered Dimo's pained wails.

"A-are you all right?" I asked, drawing near him.

"You saw that, right?" He gasped at me. "She's as bad as those monsters! She kills the Shades even though she's one herself… and she has fun doing it, too! She gets off on it! There's no way she won't end up killing a human someday soon! Take my word for it and get the hell out of here!"

Cradling his wounded side, Dimo got to his feet and made to leave.

"Wait! Did she not just save our lives? She killed those Shades to protect us!
And still you'd shower her with hate? She's a good person… why can't you see that?"

Dimo looked at me blankly. The sarcasm and meanness were gone from his eyes; in their place I spied a gaping void. Narrowing those eyes, he proclaimed in a dry, rattling voice:

"That thing isn't human. Can't you understand, preacher?
I'm not being prejudiced; it's natural to hate a monster!"

Dimo then left on unsteady legs. Despite his deep wound, he fled with surprising speed.

Alone now, I steeled my resolve and approached the woman. She must have overheard the conversation between me and Dimo, but she said not a word about it.

"Are you injured?" I asked. She remained silent. She wouldn't even meet my eyes. I saw blood running down her inner thigh and removed my scarf, thinking to use it as a bandage. Splattered with Dimo's blood it wasn't completely sanitary, but I thought it would be better than nothing.

"Allow me to wrap a bandage around that." I thought she might stop me, but instead she just stood still. Taking this as a sign of acceptance, I hurriedly began to wrap the scarf about her thigh. I noticed each time my fingers brushed her leg, she gave a little jump, and that struck me as so human... so girlish... I couldn't help but smile.

"Could I speak with you for a while? I'd like to be your friend."

So saying, I followed her into her home. I realize I was being pushy, but recognizing she was obviously awkward when it came to human relations, I thought it better to act a bit familiar. Hesitantly taking a seat upon the wet and semi-rotting floorboards, I began to speak of the wonders of tolerance and good-will toward man, just as I always did when reaching a new village. This time, however, so aware of her personal plight as a victim, my speech was even more impassioned.

Before I realized it, by the time I had finished speaking it was already well into the night. When I looked toward her, I saw the woman had fallen asleep, back towards me. Attacked by Shades and forced to sleep in this hovel... oh, this poor, courageous woman! Had the bleeding of the wound of her leg let up? I wondered as my own eyelids grew heavy.

I don't know how long I slept, but I awoke from the coldness of the night air piercing my skin. It was still quiet and dark outside; the sun not yet having risen. When I looked to my side, the sleeping form of the woman was no longer there. Straining my eyes, I saw drops of blood on the floor leading to the door. Alarmed, I rushed out myself. Making my way through the obscuring mist, I soon felt the presence of someone off a bit further into the bushes. I raised my voice to call for her, before realizing I had yet to ask her name. In this night previously muted by silence, the sudden sound of pained, ragged panting pierced my ears.
There was no mistaking it, that was her voice.

"Ugh... hah... hah, hah, hah, hah... hahaha..."

Had her wound reopened? Did she come out here to withstand the pain alone?
Needing to know, I stepped forward.

"Are you all right? I can redress your wound..."

The mist lightened enough for me to see her form. I gave a sharp gasp once I had. She really was possessed. The left half of her body swelled with unfathomable darkness, peculiar lumps circulating within it. It seemed as if another creature, with its own will, separate from the rest of her. She had noticed me by then, so I did my best not to look disturbed. Repeating 'all men are brothers' in my mind like a prayer, I showed her a smile. But her gaze was turned downward. I followed it; my eyes were pulled toward what she held in her demonic left hand. The moment I comprehended what it was, all the hairs on my body were standing on end.

What she held in her hand was... a large, engorged male member... yet it was hers. Upon the swarthy organ, there were littered many veins, which I could even clearly see throbbing.

She wasn't merely possessed. She was of both sexes!

"On nights after I kill Shades... ...I can't stop myself..."

Lifting her head to face me in the mist, the woman spoke her first words to me. Her eyes were narrowed, her thin lips opened like a thin cut on her face. Her pupils locked onto me as their target, her left hand began to move up and down furiously. Her breathing became even more ragged, and her upturned eyes began to lose their focus. I knew what was coming next.

"Stop it!"

I cried, averting my eyes from the moment of climax.

"Don't come near me, you... you monster!"

As I scrambled frenziedly away, her shrieking voice seems to pursue me. It was an ear-splitting wail that seemed to be both laughing and crying. Scared. I'm scared. Disgusting. Revolting. Hateful. I hate you. Disgusting. Revolting. I can't understand. I don't want to understand. Disgusting. I'm scared.

From within my heart surged hideous feelings that hitherto did not exist there. I realized I too was crying. Crying at the top of my lungs. I then promptly vacated the contents of my stomach. That is the entirety of my experience with that woman. In the one night I spent with her, as if a screw had come loose within me, ugly and hateful feelings continue to overflow, uncontrolled. I hate her for making me like this. I despise her. I fear her. She's disgusting. Hateful. Scary. Scared.

Oh, but please do not misunderstand me. I'm not being prejudiced; she's not human. No one with a body as hideous and terrifying as hers could possibly be. It's natural to hate a monster, to wish for its death. Is it not? Can you honestly tell me I'm wrong?

I'm not wrong... am I? Am I? Am I? I'm not being cruel. I'm not the ugly one here. I'm an upstanding person. Am I? Am I wrong? I'm not wrong.

Am I? Am I?



YOKO FACT 13 - From http://getnews.jp/archives/60012

Is the world map of NieR based on the Tokyo Bay?

Yoko: We've made it so it's somewhere in/near Tokyo. We tried to make it with the idea that, "perhaps this is how the place will look after Japan has been flooded due to the plate shift". By the way, other regions have different settings, and the Tokyo Tower will not be featured in the overseas versions. Depending on the region that the game is sold, it could be the Tokyo Tower, the Empire State Building, Big Ben, the German Television Tower, the Eiffel Tower...etc.

NieR Story Summary

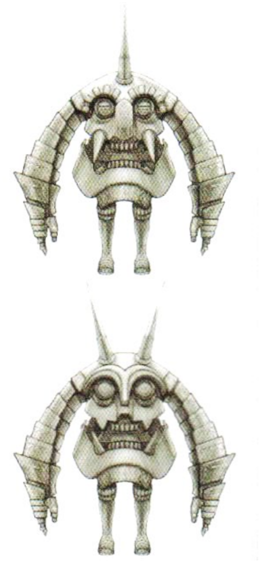
After 1400 years of waiting for some way to fix Yonah's Gestalt, Gestalt NieR decides he had enough. It's blatantly obvious that no progress is being made. Devola and Popola try to convince him for just a little bit more time but he's having none of it. Gestalt NieR, Devola, Popola, and Grimoire Noir come up with a plan to use an emergency failsafe system created during Project Gestalt: Grimoire Weiss. While Grimoire Noir had been created to separate a Gestalt from its body, Grimoire Weiss was created to put them back. Fusing Grimoire Weiss with Grimoire Noir will send a signal throughout the Gestalts to forcibly reunite every Gestalt with its Replicant. It's likely that it won't go perfectly but they decide that there's no time like the present to try and get humanity back on the road forward.

Everything having to do with a Good White Book, an Evil Black Book, a song of prophecy, an evil disease, dark shadows, Sealed Verses, stone fragments, and an evil Shadowlord Castle is all a bunch of generic, tropey fantasy crap that Devola and Popola came up with in order to string along Replicant NieR into getting Grimoire Weiss and activating the failsafe.

So back to Replicant NieR (that we will call just NieR from now on). His sister Yonah having contracted the Black Scrawl, he is trying his best to provide her with medicine to appease her suffering. One day, he and Yonah talk about a white flower that could grant any wish; a Lunar Tear. She is hoping that this flower could cure her and thus allow NieR to stop worrying about her. She goes to Popola who, subtly, suggest her to go to the Lost Shrine.

NieR learns about Yonah disappearance and goes to save her. He finally makes it to the top of the Shrine where his sister is sleeping and Grimoire Weiss is stored. He breaks the magical barrier protecting the Grimoire and saves Yonah. NieR returns to his village with his sister and Weiss, his new companion.

Learn more about NieR's everyday life in the story The Red and the Black, on page 190.



Hansel and Gretel, guardians of Grimoire Weiss

Back there, Popola and NieR talk a bit about Weiss and all that fantasy bullshit. She states that Grimoire Weiss' power is highly linked with Shades, and he might save Yonah and everyone from the Black Scrawl. That's why she invites him to go check the city of Aerie, where a lot of Shades has been reported. Of course, the true reason being that Grimoire Weiss needs to obtain all the Sealed Verses to be able to use its power, and one of them can be found there.

The Aerie is a town built suspended over an extremely deep canyon, connection together by crude scaffolding, ladders and narrow bridges. There, NieR is hoping to talk with the mayor about the alleged Shade invasion. Unfortunately, the chief and all the residents of the Aerie are shut-ins that refuse to leave their homes and just shoot at the outsider to piss off.

They decide to backtrack for now. On their way back, NieR spots something shiny in an abandoned tent outside town. The shiny object was, in fact, a wreath made of Lunar Tears, the flower he told Yonah about. The owner of this crown isn't pleased with the stranger; she is a half-naked woman carrying two crude looking dented swords. They fight until a loud roar is heard. A giant Shade crawl down the mountain. NieR and the woman decide to put their differences aside and work together. The fight ends with the monster running away with a missing eye, and the women depleted to the point where she collapses. Lastly, NieR was able to obtain his first Sealed Verse.

NieR decides to stay close to the fainted girl and wait for her to regain consciousness.
Then, they have a talk where he doesn't learn much, except her name; Kainé.

Back to the village, NieR is checking on his sister; she is in great pain. He decides to go bug Popola who refers him to a shaman fish; their liver contains a chemical that's said to dull strong pain. To Seafront we go!

Seafront is the hub of world civilization—granted, you can count the number of civilizations left in the known world on one hand. But still, it's a relativity busting metropolis compared to NieR's village. The city has quite a marketplace, with a much larger range of items compared to his home village's meager offerings.

After having to wander aimlessly for a long time, Weiss advices NieR to go check near the docks. There, he asks an old man about the shaman fish, and in return gives him a location where that said fish can be found. NieR goes to a strip of beach on the far western edge of town. After two hundred and seventy-eight attempts, he finally fishes what he was looking for; time to go back to the village.

The day after, Yonah is feeling much better, even more after a good night sleep. Her brother is also much relieved.

After a few days taking various requests from the villager and staying by Yonah's side, NieR goes to Popola in hope to find more Sealed Verses. She explains that to obtain them he will need to fight a lot of Shades, especially the more imposing ones. Aerie is currently getting overrun by Shades, so that might be a good place to start. However, he will have to find a better sword. She points him in the direction of a weapon shop to the north, in a place called the "Junk Heap". Off we go!



Yonah Concept Art

The place is filled with garbage and scrap from the old world. There are all kinds of machines in there no one remembers how to use. Fortunately, the field leading to the Junk Heap is a much more sustainable area. A sorry looking hut thrones there; this is the weapon shop Popola mentioned. Inside, they barge in on two children who are keeping the shop. Jacob, the oldest brother, explains to NieR that the shop isn't doing so well lately with their mother missing. To enhance his weapon, he will need some materials that can only be found inside the Junk Heap.

To learn more about Jacob and Gideon's backstory, you can read The Magic Mountain, on page 228.

The maze looking place is protected by countless robots that attack NieR and his companion Weiss. After collecting three Titanium Alloy, they backtrack to the weapon shop. His sword is now in better shape than ever. Just when they are about to leave, Gideon, the other brother, throws a tantrum; he is really affected by the missing mother. NieR being the good-hearted guy he is, decides to help to two children and goes back to the Junk Heap to thoroughly investigate it.

On the lowest level, he is stopped by a giant robot, part of the Defense System. They fight for a while, NieR throwing bombs inside its mechanical mouth—an obvious weak point. The machine perished, they are able to exit the complex, with a new Sealed Verse. On the way out, our heroes come across a pair of corpses, one of them female. The delinquent mother was trying to run away with her lover, abandoning her children and this place.

Back inside the weapon shop, NieR decides to come clean with the children about their mother's fate. Gideon can't believe what he just heard and runs off into the back room. Jacob seems a lot more composed; he already knew about his mother's frustration and this man she was seeking a way out with. NieR quietly lets himself out, a bit uneasy about this all situation.

Having obtained an enhanced weapon, our heroes are now ready to go back to Aerie where a lot of Shades are gathered.

As soon as he enters the outskirts of Aerie, NieR finds Kainé tackling some Shades. After helping her dealing with the weaklings, they continue the defend the city together, which seems relatively intact. All the sudden, Hook—the giant Shade from last time—returns! It jumps on one of the city central platforms. Our band of violent misfits starts attacking the creature, avoiding getting crushed by its giant feet. At one point, NieR uses one of Weiss ability to summon a giant Dark Fist to punch it. Unfortunately, Hook manages to cling on the edge of the canyon wall and recover from that attack. It takes up residence at the second platform of the Aerie. It has grabbed hold of one of the houses with its tail-hand.

On the way to this other platform, they hear the villager grunting about Kainé presence, stating that she must be the reason all of this is happening. NieR is very upset by the villagers' accusation; how can they be so shameless; to let her fight the monster while they are shut inside their houses doing absolutely nothing except insulting her. Anyway, our mocked heroes finish the trek to meet up with Hook. Too bad for the creature, as someone in a very bad mood is there waiting for him. She is determined to finish this thing already.

After much stabbing, slashing and Dark Magic punching, Kainé tries to blow a final attack to the thing while it's stunned; she is stopped by Hook's last dirty trick, a hallucinogenic miasma which she gets a face full of. After waiting for the noxious fumes to dissipate, the monster starts... speaking. Yes, Kainé is hearing the voice of her dead grandmother. She almost surrenders to the creature but suddenly stops staggering around. She goes full-on blood rage on Hook from here on.

Read more about Kainé's grandmother in the short story Kainé's Dreams, on page 254.

In a final attempt to stop the creature, NieR summons two Dark Fist, balls them together and smashes the fits down on Hook's head so hard it shatters the entire platform. The monster is sent to the bottom and impaled itself on the support beam. However, in the process, Kainé herself is flung to another platform from the force of the attack.

NieR runs across the Aerie to go meet up with Kainé. She finally wakes up after being brought back to life by his concerned calls. A new friendship is forged, from this point on, Kainé is part of our weird band.

Just before leaving the city, NieR realizes that he has obtained a new Sealed Verse from slaying Hook; we're getting closer and closer...



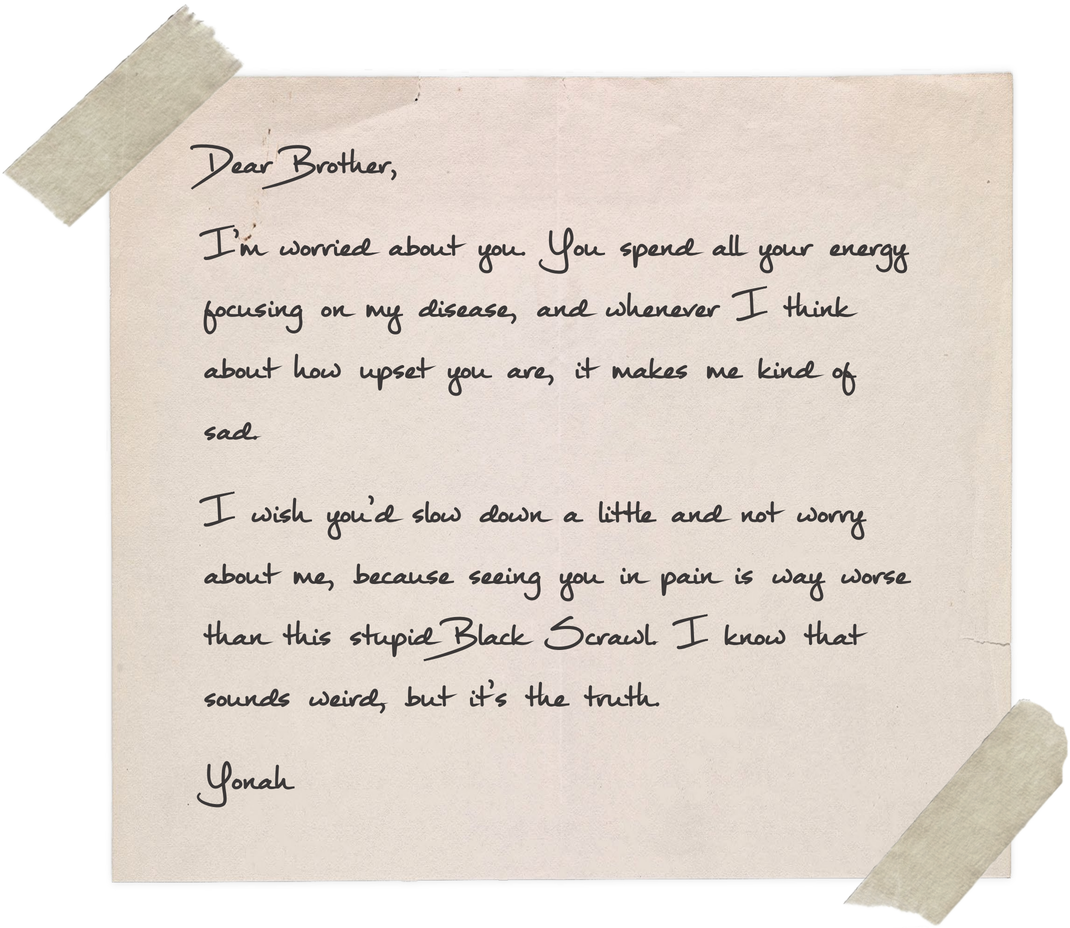
Hook Concept Art

On the way back, NieR explains to Kainé his situation, Yonah's Black Scrawl and his plan to save her. She tells him that another kingdom has been working on a cure for that disease for a while.

NieR is very interested by this new information. His next goal will be to travel to this faraway kingdom and learn more about the outcome of their research.

But before that, let's head back to the village for a bit of rest and checking-up Yonah. When was the last time he stopped at home, he wonders...?

Right before entering his home, NieR goes check the mailbox. It seems we have received a letter...



Dear Brother,

I'm worried about you. You spend all your energy focusing on my disease, and whenever I think about how upset you are, it makes me kind of sad.

I wish you'd slow down a little and not worry about me, because seeing you in pain is way worse than this stupid Black Scrawl. I know that sounds weird, but it's the truth.

Yonah

... NieR really needs to spend some quality time with Yonah.

He decided to take some days off to stay at home, or at the very least inside the village. Yonah loves to see her brother working in the garden, planting seeds, and taking care of the flowers. Maybe one day he will come back with a chick just as last time...

After a two-month break, NieR curiosity for the potential cure eventually exceeds the guilt of neglecting Yonah. Before trekking out into the desert wastelands, he goes and has a chat with Popola. She warns him of the dangerous scorpions and the wolves. In a desert? Well anyway, NieR goes back, takes his stuff, and leave the city in direction of Façade.

Kainé isn't very pleased by NieR's unexpected absence but quickly resigns on scolding him. To get to the desert, our heroes need to go south. Jogging for a while in that direction will bid farewell to any form of greenery and really any color besides browns and oranges.

Upon their arrival, they quickly realized that being outsiders and not speaking the language can be impassable obstacles to get an audience with the King. Hopefully, they find a young girl that might be able to help them. After showing them the city, its people, and enumerating numerous rules, she goes and asks the King's Advisor. He denies any encounter with the prince; yes, a prince because the King died of the "Foul Black Illness".

All the way back to the city's entrance, they are about to leave when a masked soldier runs over to a pair of his comrades. Apparently, the prince is missing and went in the Barren Temple. Due to an awful lot of rules, they cannot go help him, but Kainé chooses to volunteer for that task.

There are now inside the Barren Temple. Fyra, the young girl from earlier, helped them find the place but due to rule 50,527, she can't go any further. After having to pass numerous trials and obey the temple's absolute commands, they end up inside a vast room filled with boxes. Those cubes start moving and acting as a single entity; that new foe is called Shahryar. It takes different forms: sometimes as a circle of boxes spinning slowly, other times as a man with long arms.

With Shahryar finally fallen, the prince rises from a near pit. He notices something that has been shot out of the Barren Temple guardian upon its defeat. It appears to be some kind of mask. It is the Royal Mask, the artifact needed by the prince to truly becoming the leader of this kingdom. NieR also got a new Sealed Verse.

The new king is very apologetic about this all situation and promises our heroes to grant them whatever they desire. He also gives NieR a weird shaped sword.



The new King of Façade, wearing the Royal Mask

Learn more about Fyra and the Kind of Façade in the short story A Little Princess, on page 210.

Back home again, NieR promises to stay with Yonah for the night. She seems okay, the pain is still there but the fish medicine still has some effects.

In his sleep, he has a weird dream about a boy that doesn't speak. The boy is trying to spell something and NieR must read on his lips. Eventually, he makes out the words SEALED VERSES, DREAMS, and FOREST OF MYTH. After waking up, Yonah tells him about the weird dream she had; the exact same one. NieR gets shivers down his spine and chooses to talk to Popola about this strange occurrence.

As soon as he enters Popola's office, she presents NieR a letter she just received. Its author is the mayor of a small village in the Forest of Myth. Our hero is shocked by those words, he salutes Popola and immediately takes off to the mentioned village.

The Forest of Myth is located near the Northern Plains, it's a rather uneventful trip. Welcome to the village, it is an... unusual area. Weiss is stunned by the silence. They meet with the mayor who is chilling out in the middle of town, outside his house. The conversation is weird, he seems confused, almost creepy. After a minute, the old man seems a little brighter and alive than before. He explains: in the past weeks, a mysterious disease called the Deathdream has spread across the Forest, and those who caught it are trapped in their own dreams.

After wandering for a while inside the mayor's dream, they finally found a way out, and free the villager in the process. NieR even got a Sealed Verse!

Read more about the Deathdream in the story The Forest of Myth on page 234.

After having helped the villagers escape their dreams, our heroes go back to Popola to report on the Forest of Myth. She doesn't have much to say, except that Yonah was looking for him.

Someone has been sending a letter to Yonah. Apparently, it's a sick guy with a whole lot of trouble. She wants us to help him. NieR leaves the house grumbling to himself... The guy lives in a really big house down south. Once arrived, they are welcomed by some helpful fellow waiting outside. It's the butler of this mansion. They enter, and the man seems to be showing our band to a new room down the corridor. He asks them to wait there and then leaves. After a while, NieR gets impatient and starts looking around the mansion. No one is here, even Kainé can't be found once he and Weiss return to the room. After wandering around, collecting keys, opening doors and even killing giant spiders, NieR enters a room where soothing music emanates.

It's a young blindfolded boy that was playing the piano. Maybe it is the one Yonah was talking about. He explains that this blindfold is for the safety of everyone around; his eyes can turn anything into stone.

Learn more about Emil's origin is the short story The Stone Flower on page 144.

However, he seems unaware of the letter Yonah has received. Maybe the butler can tell our heroes more about what this is all about. After finding him, he explains that he wrote this letter for NieR and not Yonah. He heard the tale of his courageous exploits and was seeking help to cure "Master Emil's eyes".

It appears there is a way to help Emil. However, the process is documented inside a book stored in the library; a den for the Shades.
NieR, Weiss follows Emil in direction of the said library.

Once inside, the trio kills some Shades. After the job is done, the blind boy is "looking around" for the precious book. Suddenly, a purple one goes flying from the shelf and spins in mid-air. This is Grimoire Rubrum one of the 13 Grimoires. The book is quickly defeated and ends up erupting into a fountain of paper.
Despite a few hundred sheets of paper drifting about in the air, a single scrap of text catches NieR's eyes. He grabs it and this is exactly what they were looking for; how luckier can they get?!

Anyway, NieR obtained the last Sealed Verse and helped Yonah's friend.
Before leaving, Kainé decides to have a little chat with Emil.

Sad fact:

Grimoire Rubrum was Weiss' friend before they became Grimoires.

Read more about this story in And Then There Were None on page 151.

Back to his house, NieR is worried for Yonah, her health is getting worse again. His only hope now is to find Grimoire Noir, kill it with Weiss and the Sealed Verses, and save his sister. But before that, he must beg Popola again to obtain some medicine to reduce Yonah's pain.

She asks him to go get some vapor moss at the other side of the city. Just when NieR is done collecting the plant, Emil appears before him. He is breathing heavily and collapses. The young boy is hearing weird noises, and he is sensing a great danger coming for the village. Indeed, a legion of Shades is pouring in from the Southern Gate. Our hero, followed by Weiss goes to help combat them. When the Shades have been slain, an enormous Shade obliterates the gate and enters the city. Parts of the village is destroyed by the monster's elastic arms. It seems to be heading toward the library: that's not good, that's where Yonah is!

After a non-stop struggle against the monster, NieR finally uses one of Weiss ability and bisects the beast just outside the Library doors. Kainé also chips in by trimming off a few tentacles off its face. But that still not enough, time for a final follow-up attack. NieR launches a half dozen magic spears in its neck. It is finally over. However, a scream can be heard in the library; what could be going on?

Shades have infiltrated the place and are attacking villagers that were seeking refuge inside. Emil has been holding the line in here protecting them while we were out brawling with the giant.

When everything seems to finally be over, a remnant of the giant flies inside the room. Time for a rematch. The tentacular creature is pretty agile due to its smaller size. In a final effort, NieR pushes it inside the basement and Kainé closes the door. Is that it? Is the village safe? Nope. Out of nowhere, our hero gets stabbed in the shoulder by a spike coming out of a puddle of blood. Then, a humanoid Shade slowly rises up from the bloody floor. He is holding the unconscious Yonah in his hand and a black book is floating by his side. This must be the Shadowlord!

Of course, “The Shadowlord” is nothing but a fantasy name imagined by the Twins. In front of NieR is his original self, Gestalt NieR. He heard the village was under attack by Shades and decided to finally intervene, taking Yonah to safety. So, this encounter wasn’t necessarily planned but why even wait at this point; NieR has acquired Weiss and all the Sealed Verses. So, he decides to rob NieR of everything.

One thing to understand is that Devola has been giving NieR lots of side quests to make him more powerful and more capable of getting the Sealed Verses. Popola suddenly got a convenient plot-letter in the mail every time he needs somewhere to go. Everything works according to their plans, and this is why everything falls together perfectly and easily.

The only problem is that Grimoire Weiss lost his memory when he was awakened. Therefore, Gestalt NieR orders Grimoire Noir to remind Weiss of his true purpose by electrocuting and “brainwashing” him. However, our heroes’ favorite book isn’t very cooperative and ends up rejecting Gestalt NieR’s plans.

Still, Noir was able to steal all the Sealed Verses, incapacitating Weiss. Our tired and injured hero has to fight yet again to get those back. After Noir got beaten up pretty badly, the Shadowlord decides to give up for now. He flaps his ethereal cape and flies off into the sky with Yonah.

NieR is crawling on the floor. Maybe he thought this situation couldn’t get any worse than that. But whatever was going on inside his head, he is not prepared for what’s coming. Kainé has been holding the door for a while, the beast pushed inside the basement is still trying to get out. Emil’s magic seemed ineffective against it and NieR is dying of blood lost right now. Only one option left: ask Emil to use his power to petrify Kainé and seal away the Shade. The boy halfheartedly lets his bloodstained blindfold slip off to the ground. After saying her goodbyes, the entire library is filled with a brilliant white light. She is now unmoving, like a beautiful, lifeless sculpture.

Emil tries to support NieR’s body as he gets up. Robbed of the only thing that mattered to him, the brother swears: he will try is best to make things work out in the end.

Further insight on NieR Gestalt and NieR Replicant

Written partially by The Dark Id

I think this is finally time to talk about NieR Gestalt (or known as NIER is the west) and NieR Replicant. Cavia, the company behind the Drakengard Series, was working on a new opus. However, mid-development, what was supposed to become Drakengard 3 slowly transforms into something else, a spin-off called NieR. Square Enix was looking for an adult action game, something equivalent to Kingdom Hearts but for players in their twenties or thirties. This has shaped NieR greatly, even if Cavia isn’t renowned for their Beat them all.

Well anyway, Square Enix is really looking forward NieR success, especially overseas. A close cooperation starts between Square Enix USA and Cavia. During a meeting where Yoko and the writers explain the story, the Americans are not impressed by the protagonist; he is too young, too thin, androgynous, this is no what the west players are looking for when playing an action-heavy game. Apparently, European and American players want to embody a strong, muscular, and sweaty old man.

A few months later, two versions of the game is been worked on: NieR Replicant, the story of a brother saving his sick sister, and NieR Gestalt, a forty-year-old dad trying to save his sick daughter. In Europe and America, only the latter is released under the name of NIER, for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

But what really matters here is the effects those changes have on the story.

1 – The relationship between NieR and the Twins.

How long have the Twins been a major part of Brother NieR's life? For almost the entirety of it! Popola and Devola have known him for most of his cognizant life. As opposed to Father NieR though, his relationship is a whole world deeper than just acquaintance/drinking buddy/job hunter though. Popola and Devola are essentially Brother NieR and Yonah's parents at this point. They've spent years without their biological parents and the Twins have spent a great deal of time helping them in life, doing what they can, and even helping raise Yonah while NieR is busy putting food on the table.

Brother NieR has relied on these two for over a decade, they could be considered the foundation for his very existence. As competent as Brother is, he still needs help in everyday life. He may know how to kill things, but that doesn't always cut it! He'd have never been able to survive the early orphan years without Popola finding him work and Devola taking care of Yonah while he was away. These two adults he trusts more than anyone else in the world. When everyone else seemed unable to help, they were there. Father NieR may have needed the work, but he's a fully capable grown man who probably has some sort of talents. He could always be a guard! What guard would trust Young Brother NieR?

One of the recurring themes of NieR Replicant is the emotional distance between parents/adults and children, how all the children of the world of NieR seem to be so separated from their parents in terms of how they feel towards them and what happens to them. Junk Heap brothers were abandoned, Village kids are being told to steal, Seafront kids are locked away, Façade confines childhood spirit with its rules, Emil doesn't even know Sebastien, Kainé is hated by the people of the Aerie, all the children in this game are basically divided against the adults and this extends to NieR and Yonah too. NieR's relationship with the villagers is though. Popola and Devola are different, they're not like the other adults. They listen, they discuss, they help, they do everything they can to give NieR and Yonah a leg up in life. The Twins don't treat NieR like a child, they treat him like a capable person and that makes them incredibly important to him emotionally. He trusts them, the twins are also the last thread of his old life.

When the Shadowlord and Jack of Hearts (the giant tentacular monster) took Yonah they didn't just take her, they took Brother NieR's entire world. Those cheery views, his happy-go-lucky yet budding mature attitude, the opinions that drove him to believe in people, the comforting seclusion of his village and the reliability of the people within it. These were things he lost when the Shadowlord came, but the one constant that remained was the Twins. When NieR's village became threatening and dark and his house became empty and lonely, the Twins were always there. They presumably have been helping Brother (and Father) with tips and leads for the 5-year gap, so even when everything else changed for the worse, Popola and Devola remained the same. That's why their betrayal in the last part of the game isn't just a heel turn, it's them effectively taking the last part of his old life away. It's the final piece of his childhood!

2 – The relationship between NieR and Yonah

For the most part, it's very similar.

Brother NieR is very happy for Yonah when she's got a brand-new friend around her age, someone that she could talk to and even play with. She apparently has friends in the village but doesn't really keep up with many of them. When Brother NieR finds out that the person sending the letter is a boy though, he becomes more cautious and overprotective as only a big brother can. Now, you see he's been given this task to essentially protect Yonah from the world at large as the dying wish of his parents. He's an impressionable, loyal young man who's been given a job like that and he flips his lid when suddenly this boy breaks through the little comfortable bubble that he's created in the village.

So, he's not really mad or afraid that Yonah made a new friend, she's got lots of friends apparently, it's that someone he doesn't know who lives in a place where he's never been, has somehow gotten through. When NieR had previously believed that Yonah is safe, if isolated from the outside world at the village.

3 – The relation between NieR and the rest of the band

The whole relationship with the party is different in the sense that Kainé and Weiss generally tend to hold disbelief towards Brother NieR and second guess him a lot more. He's a teenager of course and they're both older than him, so stuff like "do you know what you're doing, kid?!" comes out a lot more. The older adults in

the village do the same sort of thing to him on a regular basis with "I can't believe a little boy like you fights Shades!". It's part of the divide in Japan with children and adults compared to the one with children themselves.

Weiss comes off more like an irritated babysitter at times, many of those little tirades he goes on at Father NieR end up sounding more like frustrated lectures to him. Like Weiss sees a chance to change the young boy into a "proper" grown up and is trying to influence him. Kainé is a little weirder though, she's kind of new at this point in the story and hasn't really had time to grow yet.

4 – The relationship between NieR and the villagers

The world of NieR is an ill-defined Medieval European setting where everything's just generally awful for everyone. Brother's spent only about a few years as an orphan, living with Yonah in the house their parents built (which according to the villagers is the nicest in town) and at some point, I think it has been established that his dad taught him how to use a sword and some survival techniques. His status as "plucky orphan" is fairly recent, only a few years, and it's only been a little while since he actually started fighting Shades. Until that point, he'd mostly been getting by (and still does) through the charity of Popola, Devola, and everyone in the village.

The villagers often ask NieR to go do mundane collection task, and this better fit Brother NieR. He's a dumb, idealistic, naive kid who believes what people tell him and just wants to make people happy. These people probably think "Oh, I could walk down the dangerous road with Shades to buy seeds or I could pay the nice boy on the hill to do it for me!". It's how Brother NieR gets by in this world. Go fetch some herbs! Kill a goat! Buy me some seeds! They're giving him the mundane busy work so they can help him out and feel better about his situation.

And strangely enough, unlike Father NieR he actually seems to welcome these quests. As if he actually wants to do them, it's pretty funny listening to Weiss basically go "Oh my god how do you go day to day doing this boring work?!"

5 – The relationship between NieR and the Junk Heap Brothers

The quest about NieR trying to find the brothers' mom plays out the exact same way in both games, but as different characters who hold different beliefs and exist in different circumstances, the impact of this quest hits in different ways.

Father NieR seems to approach this quest begrudgingly, like he knows this is a waste of time and that he knows what's going to await him when he does find their mother. He doesn't say it though even when Weiss presses him on it because he doesn't want to admit it, he sees these two kids as vulnerable and doesn't want them to end up alone without someone to take care of them at their young ages. It's like when you were a little kid and you asked your parents to look under the bed in search of monsters, of course, there are no actual monsters but your they probably play along just to make you feel better. Father NieR knows how this is all going to end but despite this, he fulfills his goal out of his own sense of duty. Father NieR is a very loyal, duty-obsessed man. He's admitted that he wants to help people because some people can't help themselves, it's a noble goal!

Brother NieR, on the other hand, approaches this with wide-eyed optimism. When arriving at the Junk Heap, he finds these two kids (who are very close in age to Yonah and himself) faced with the exact same situation that he lives every day: losing their parents and becoming orphans. He knows how bad this situation is and when presented with the task of "saving" their mother, he rushes off to try and fix the problem as only a young, plucky JRPG protagonist could. NieR so achingly wants there to be a happy conclusion to this! Weiss calls this out even harder on Brother NieR because it's so naive to have this belief in their world, and as they get deeper into Junk Heap and the gravity of the situation begins to pile up, NieR simply doesn't want to face the facts.

NieR doesn't want to accept this failure, he doesn't want to see another pair of orphaned kids just like him and Yonah, and when his failure finally does come it just continues the vicious cycle that the world he lives in creates. It's a heavy blow, as Brother NieR is a young, idealistic, wide-eyed, hopeful young man who (so far in the plot) has accomplished everything he set his mind to. This failure teaches him a lesson, that he can't always be the hero and save the day, that the world is harsher than he tries to envision it as. It's a pretty powerful moment that marks the first step of Brother NieR becoming a man.



The Magic Mountain

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. This story takes place less than a week before the game. Let us learn more about Jakob and his younger brother Gideon.

This English version was brought to you by Defade.

Do people lose their way because they're human? Or are they human because of that?
Going beyond piled up conflicts and indignation, we live.

1

"I'm going to be late. You guys should sleep first."

That's all mother ever said to us brothers when she left for the mountain.

"Please take care, mom."

Looking at her back weighed down by a sturdy bag, I said the same words every time.

A long, long time ago, the junkyard was said to be a military faculty. After all the workers disappeared and left the faculty unusable, only robots remained. Their remains were made from rare metals.
Mother would pick them up and sell them in the shop.

"Um, mommy..."

Come back soon, my brother wanted to say, but I shook my head at him. Those were taboo words. He looked depressed, and I put my hands on his shoulders. I wanted to hold back this small body that seemed ready to run after her at any moment. Suddenly, I had a bad feeling.
Everything else was as usual, only I tried to do something different.

"Mommy..."

My brother looked up at me, surprised. Mother did not turn back.
Will she slow her steps if I shouted for her to wait? In the end, I didn't try that. And on that day, mother left.

2

One day after mother's departure, my brother asked me the same question repeatedly.

"Is mommy not back yet?"

"She's coming back soon."

Usually, mother's back by noon of the next day, looking displeased.
However, this is the first time she didn't come back before evening.

"Brother, you said the same thing a while ago."

"I did?"

"You did! Brother, you're such a liar!"

Waahhhh, my brother cried out. I'm busy preparing food and cleaning up the house, but my brother was too small to do anything. He must've been bored.

"She went deeper than usual."

"Hey, let's go find mommy!"

"NO!"

My brother flinched. My voice was too loud. I immediately began cooing him with a softer voice.

"Didn't you make a promise with mother? The mountains are dangerous, so you mustn't ever follow her. Only naughty kids break promises."

My brother probably gave up. He cried silently. Mother only got mad at us and beat us because we were naughty. That's what my ignorant brother thought.

"Come. I'll read you a book. Which one do you like?"

My brother sprung up and pointed at his favorite picture book.

3

It was midnight on the second day since mother's departure. Silently, to not wake my brother, I got off my bed and went into mother's room. Her scent lingered. The scent she let off when she faced the mirror and put on her makeup. It was overly sweet, and almost gave me a headache, so I could never like it.

Her bed was the same as always, but I had a bad feeling about the drawers in her wardrobe and dressing table before I even opened them. But I have to make sure. I pulled out the drawers, and saw that her clothes had disappeared along with her old traveling cloak. Her bag seemed different than usual because she was hiding the cloak inside. The drawer in her dressing table was empty as well. All her pretty bottles and cans with white powder in it were gone. What remained were her old, unused hairbrush and a curling iron.

That's right. A day before mother left, we had a customer. It was a man from a faraway city. After talking a long time with the man, mother told brother and me to play outside. I didn't know what they discussed. But afterward, mother was unusually happy. She probably gave us no thought, and only immersed herself in fantasies of life in faraway cities. No, she was like that from way before.
She was indifferent to my brother and me.

We were just in her way...!

I came back to myself when I heard a shattering mirror. I realized that I threw the hairbrush at the mirror. My brother could've been woken. I strained my ears, but couldn't hear anything from the neighboring room. I relaxed, and began to gather the mirror shards.

4

Three days after mother's disappearance. My brother cried and threw temper tantrums. I found some leftovers of materials in the workroom and put together some toys for him, and he finally calmed down and played with them. I probably shouldn't be the one to say, but I'm pretty skilled with my hands. I ground the rust off whatever material mother brought back and fixed any bent one's ever since I was small. Now, I can manufacture materials and reinforce weapons.

My mother didn't teach me any of it. She hated rough work. That's why my methods are completely self-developed. When I was playing with tools that my father used, I managed to somehow learn. When I was cleaning out the workroom, I realized that we didn't have many materials left to sell. Usually, mother would pick up more from the mountain before that happens, but mother is no longer… I realized that mother not coming shouldn't be such a big deal. The more important issue is materials. If we don't have anything to sell in the shop, we can't live on. How should we live on? There's food for a few days, but when I think of what comes after, I can't help but be scared. How would we be living one month later? Half a year later? Even later than that?

"Brother?"

My brother looked up at me, worried. I must've been thinking with a very serious face.

"You're not going to open the shop?"

In truth, I promised to open the shop even when mother was gone. Most of the customers aren't only here to buy things. They often traded our materials with food or other necessities.

"The shop is temporarily closed."

"Why?"

"We don't have enough materials to sell."

"If mother comes back…"

"It's okay!"

I let out a louder voice than I intended to. My brother's shoulders were shaking.

"Your brother will do something about it."

I tapped my brother lightly on his back. I can't get worried. I can't randomly get angry either. Whenever mother became annoyed and unhappy, I could only bear her anger silently. I should be the only one experiencing that.

"You don't have to worry about anything."

Pushing back my annoyance and worry, I tried to be gentle. It was an easy thing. My brother would smile just at that. However, mother wouldn't even do something as simple as that.

"Hey, I'll make it so that toy can move faster."

"Really?"

My brother broke out into a wide smile. He must've forgotten both the shop and mother.
Mother couldn't do this, could she?

I'm good at this. Even if mother wouldn't do anything, even if she weren't here, my brother would smile if I'm here. I'm happy about that.

5

Four days after mother went out, my brother disappeared. I thought he was fidgety since breakfast. It was after I cleaned up and began the chores that my brother disappeared from the spot beside the shop where he was playing. He wasn't in the child room, mother's room, or the workroom. I turned the house inside out in search for him. I investigated all spots that he could've hidden in, the wardrobe, under the bed...

He wasn't outside the shop either. I don't see him around the bridge leading to the plains either. At last I thought of the worst possibility. The junkyard. Now that I think about it, my brother insisted on "finding mother" yesterday. He might've gone by himself because he thought I wasn't going to accompany him.

I ran. No, he can't go into the mountains. Because... there are things that shouldn't be seen.

When my brother and I were still young, I once went into the mountain against mother's wishes. My brother won't stop crying, and I wanted to cry as well, so I took off after mother. A short distance into the entrance, I heard mother's voice. Yes, it's mother, we thought and ran. But the next instant, my legs stopped. I heard a man's voice. Mother wasn't alone.

I heard low laughter and panting. I stepped further in as if entranced, and saw what should never be seen.
I couldn't remember what happened after. But after that, I never thought of chasing after mother again. I don't even want to go near the mountain's entrance.

My brother went into that forbidden place. I couldn't just stand here. I must bring him back soon. I dashed through the narrow path, climbed up the ancient ladder and simply ran.

"Brother!"

When my brother ran towards me, what engulfed me was not relief, but anger.

"Look! I picked up lots of them! Now the shop can..."

My brother was holding several materials, and I beat them out of his hand. Dented metal boards flew all over the place, and made my ears ring. My brother must've gone to pick up materials because I told him that we can't open the shop since we have nothing to sell. He thought he'd be praised. Just like how I continued to manufacture materials in hopes of being praised by mother.
However, what came out of my mouth was completely different.

"I told you not to go into the mountain!"

My brother's proud expressions disappeared without a trace, and his eyes were filled with tears.

"I'm... sorry...."

I knew what I did was horrible. I couldn't bear to look at my brother's sad face anymore, so I turned my back to him. Hearing small footsteps behind me, I began to make my way back to the entrance.

6

Five days after mother's disappearance, my brother began to repeat "mommy" over and over again. He calmed down after coming back from the mountains, but I'm not one to punish my brother just because I get a bit annoyed.

When will mommy come back, let's go find mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy....

Mother wasn't even gentle to my brother. I was the one who played with him and read picture books to him. She did cook, but then I could do that as well. I was the one who pats my fretful brother on his head to lure him to sleep, not her. I cannot understand why my brother would be so attached to mother despite all that. With mother

gone, I have to do more, but to my brother, nothing should've changed. I was annoyed. And whenever I thought that my brother could go out by himself again, I couldn't leave my eyes off him.

"Let's go out. Let's go into the junkyard."

"No. I told you, the mountains are dangerous."

"It wasn't dangerous at all."

"You were just lucky. You didn't meet that."

"That?"

"The scary robot."

There were still functioning robots in the mountains. Apparently, they were very dangerous.

"Father was killed by robots."

That was a lie. I don't know how he died.

"He was crushed by evil robots, his limbs torn off, and father died."

This was another lie, but I had no choice. I have to threaten him to prevent him from going into the mountains ever again. I highly exaggerated tales about the huge and evil robot, how father died mercilessly from its attacks. My brother cried out of fear. I feel guilty but relieved at the same time. Now my brother won't be endangered. He doesn't have to bear unpleasant memories.

"It's okay. Brother will protect you."

If I don't leave his side, my brother will be safe. He cried and clung to me, and when I embraced his small body, I felt better than ever before.

7

Six days passed after mother's disappearance. Before my brother woke up, I nailed boards to the house's back door to block passing. I did the same thing for all the windows. Now I only have to watch over the front entrance. I succeeded in planting fear of robots inside his heart, but I could not smother the childish curiosity that nudged him to go outside. Even if I constantly kept watch, my brother wanted to slip out somewhere. I couldn't protect you that way. Please stay where I can see you. Please.

I stayed by your side after you cried from nightmares, until you fell asleep again; I took your share of punishment from mother; I covered your ears so that you couldn't hear mother's deprecations, and... Because nobody ever protected me. I wanted to protect you, to make up for my share of protecting.

That night, I blocked the entrance to the mountains with huge boxes. My brother wasn't strong enough to move the boxes yet. After that, I looked at the door that faced the plains. A door made of wires separated us from the huge bridge on the other side, from where you could reach the plains. Our customers all come from that wired door. That door was the only thing connecting our house to the outside world. If I could block that, then my brother would be trapped forever. In this absolutely safe haven.

However, if customers couldn't get in, then we wouldn't be able to get food or necessities. We don't have much food left. I could bear not having a few meals, but I don't want my brother to go hungry. What should I do about food? Just thinking makes my head hurt. There are probably fish below the bridge... no, I don't even know how to fish. What about the mice around the shop? They don't seem that hard to catch with traps, but I wonder if they are edible or not. If I really had no choice, I could always cut off an arm or a leg and feed it to him. Plus, I still had time.

I searched the kitchen thoroughly for anything that looked vaguely edible. However, there was nothing worth mentioning. I thought that mother would leave us some food at least. No, if she'd do that, she wouldn't abandon us in the first place. The only things important to her were makeup and decorations. And that man who came to visit. Everything else is the same to her.

Let's stop this. Stop thinking about mother. What should I do from tomorrow? ... that's more important. Thinking about what to feed my brother is important, but what's more crucial is how to soothe my brother.
If only he'd behave more. If only he didn't miss mother, if only he didn't have any interest in robots.

Or, if he was a sickly child that had to stay in bed all day long. If he's satisfied with reading picture books at home or playing with toys, then my worries would be halved. Right. What if my brother couldn't go out alone no matter how much he wished to? What if he could no longer move his body at will? I opened the door to the children's room, careful to no make any noise. My brother was fast asleep. His blanket with a few feathers sticking out was falling onto the floor. My brother would always move in his sleep. I'm the one who had to pull his blanket over him numerous times throughout the night.

What if my brother couldn't walk? Then I could protect him. Much easier than now. My hands shook slightly, and the knife I carried felt heavy. You don't have to go anywhere, right? You don't have to walk on your own. I'd take you anywhere inside the house. I looked down at his exposed tiny legs. These things should just disappear. It's better that they do. If my brother couldn't walk, I could always be a "good brother." Let's get this over with. Before my brother wakes up. Just plunge the knife in without a second thought.

Will he cry? If he cries, then I'll embrace him gently. I'll read him his favorite picture books. I'll make him toys again. I promised to protect you, right? Yes, I will protect you. With my life. Right here, in this place. Protect. Always. Until the end of my days. That's why, I just need one. One single payment...!

The moment I swung up the knife,

"Brother..."

I stopped myself. He was just talking in his sleep. My brother smiled widely at some kind of dream he's seeing. A smile of utmost happiness. What I really wanted to protect was this. It should've been just this. All my strength left me. What am I trying to do just now?

I ran out of the children's room and outside. I wanted to leave the knife behind, but it seemed to be stuck to my fingers, and I couldn't let go of it. I ran towards the wire door, and swung my arms with all my strength. The ancient knife flew across the bridge, and I couldn't see it anymore. I unlocked the gates and headed towards the mountains. I returned the boxes to their original position, and the passageway was clear again. I felt unbelievably tired. I dragged my feet back to the children's room, and tried to cover my brother with the blanket, but fell asleep. I didn't dream.

8

Seven days have passed since mother left. Food was getting scarce, and we still had nothing to sell. Still, I wanted to open the shop. We have to live on. Can I not melt the kitchen pot and manufacture something? It doesn't even have to be a pot. If I do something to anything in the house...

While I was thinking, I heard the wire door open. Someone is here. I strained my ears, and caught some of the conversations. Not one customer, but two.

Weiss? What a weird name. What was the other guy's name?

"Brother, I'm huuuuungry."

"Wait a bit. If I remember, there's something over here..."

While searching for something to feed my brother with, I had a good idea. Should I kill the customer and steal his money? Everyone who comes here have a decent number of valuables. No, I can't. There's no way that'll go smoothly. They have two people on their side, and even if it's only one person, there's no way a kid like me can kill an adult. And even though everyone who came here were bastards, maybe those two were kind. Moreover, since mother's gone, I now own this shop. They'd be my first customers. Though I have nothing to sell, they were important customers.

The conversation and footsteps stopped. The shop's door opened.

"Welcome."

I welcomed them with my best smile.

The Forest of Myth

Deathdream – The mayor

Mayor: Be…ware…
Be…ware…the wor…ds…

NieR: The words? What do you mean?

Mayor: Contagious…words…
Those…who…dr…eam…

NieR: Those who dream?

Weiss: Hold a moment… There is a strange new sensation in my mind.

Weiss's voice rose in a quizzical way.

Weiss: It is NOT quizzical!

NieR: What's going on here!?

The villager's body shuddered as he slowly opened his eyes.

Weiss: Perhaps we should start by asking this man.

Mayor: …Who-who are you?

NieR: I'm NieR. This is Weiss.
We heard something happened to this village, so we came to see if we could help.

The mayor stared at NieR and Weiss.

Mayor: If you can speak to me… I must have caught you in my dream.

NieR: How's that again?

The villager explained.

In the past weeks, a mysterious disease called the Deathdream had spread across the Forest of Myth. Those who caught it were cursed to fall asleep and live forever within the world of their own dreams. The village mayor had determined that the Deathdream was spread from person to person by spoken words, but before he could learn more, the disease took him as well.

Weiss stared at the mayor, his mouth twitching slightly.

"Now see here," he said, "are you saying that we have been absorbed into your dream?"

"Um, well…yes," said the mayor. "I think you have."

"Oh, crap," said NieR. "So that means we've caught the Deathdream?"

Before the mayor could confirm NieR's suspicion, Weiss exploded with rage.

"Ridiculous! Preposterous! Completely unfathomable on every conceivable level!
I don't even recall falling asleep!"

The mayor attempted to take Weiss's complaints in stride.

"That's just how the Deathdream works," he said, brushing aside the book's remarks.

"My remarks shall not be brushed aside, fool!
And it would behoove you to remember that this world allows me to view all of its narration!"

The mayor twisted his mouth into an embarrassed grimace, then quickly changed the subject to who NieR had seen—and what they had discussed—since coming to the village.

"Something there must have caused you to enter my dream," said the mayor.
"A certain conversation, a specific word...something!"

NieR and Weiss racked their brains but could find no easy solutions. There were simply too many words to consider; too much random chatter; too many meaningless conversations.

"Grimoire Weiss does not engage in meaningless conversation!"

The mere suggestion that Weiss chose his words carelessly seemed to sting his pride.

"It does not 'seem' to sting my pride, you bloated gasbag of a narrator! It has demolished it utterly!"

Irritated, Weiss looked skyward, as if searching for answers in the heavens.

"I was doing no such thing! Just leave me alone already!"

The anger created by his harsh words bled over to NieR like a contagion.

"Wait," said NieR suddenly. "Did someone just say contagion?"

"Yes, I believe so. What of it?"

"Well, that villager told us to watch out for contagious words, right?"

The mayor leaned forward with renewed interest, pushing a startled Weiss aside in the process.

"Well, he must have said something, right?" asked the mayor.
"Some specific combination of words? What was it?"

"It was about dreaming, or something that dreams, or... Oh, what the hell was it?"

"A sheep!?" cried Weiss suddenly, blurting out the first thing that popped into his head.

The others stared at him for a moment before slowly shaking their heads. After a few more minutes of thought, NieR's face suddenly lit up.

"I remember!" he said. "' Those who dream.' That's what he said—I'm sure of it."

At this, the mayor produced a thick sheaf of papers from his pocket.
He flipped through them a few times before finally nodding his approval at NieR.

"That sounds right," he said as a stray sheet of paper fluttered to the ground.
"My notes also mention something about that. I bet it was the last thing you heard before you fell asleep."

The mayor shook his head, his worn pencil stub tracing lines across a lone piece of paper.

"For the last month, I've done nothing but study the disease we call the Deathdream," he said. "I mean, I'm the mayor, right? It's my job to protect people from whatever comes along. But I never expected a couple of outsiders to start entering people's dreams." The mayor paused, a grimace crossing his face. "I should probably be taking notes or something."

Weiss immediately fired back.

"I applaud the force of will it takes to research a disease in your dreams," he said,
"but perhaps we should bend your efforts to escaping this place instead of trying to understand it."

The mayor's hand tightened around his pencil, snapping it off at the tip.

"I've tried to escape. From the very first moment I realized I was locked inside my own dream;
I've been looking for a way out... but I don't think it exists. I mean, this is my dream, right?
If there was an exit, I'd know about it."

He paused for a moment, his unfocused eyes staring at nothing.

"My village was beautiful," he said to no one in particular. "And it was filled with the most wonderful people you could ever hope to meet. But once this disease took hold, things...changed. It's like someone took a sponge and soaking all the color out of our lives. I just want us to be whole again. I want us to be free." The mayor's voice took on a note of steely determination. "And I won't stop trying until it happens."

NieR nodded in agreement.

> "Huh? Wait a second, I didn't nod. Why are you—?"

> "Look. If we can be of any help," said NieR, "just ask."

> "Now hold on! I did not just say that!"

> "Silence!" cried Weiss.

The grimoire looked from NieR to the mayor and back again, his face filling with confidence.

> "Grimoire Weiss's face is always confident, thank you very much! Now see here, Mayor.
> You told us that nothing can exist in this dream without your knowledge of it.
> Yet you seemed surprised to see us when we first arrived, yes?"

The mayor slowly raised his head, realization dawning on his face.

> "Oh my god," he said, "You're right. You're right! I had no idea you were coming!"

> "The human imagination is a limitless engine," said Weiss, "and dreams are the fuel.
> If you can imagine an exit, then it must be so. With your permission, we shall search it out."

> "Thank you," said the mayor. "I don't know how I can repay you."

> "Payment is not required. We are as eager as you to be done with this place."

The mayor suddenly felt as if he could breathe again. He'd almost forgotten what it was like.

> "Good luck, you two!" he called at the departing forms of NieR and Weiss.

> "We're all counting on you!"

As NieR slowly faded into the misty forest, the mayor was struck by a sense of déjà vu.

I saw this man once before, he thought. But where...?

NieR's mood darkened as he trudged through the forest. Hours earlier, when the beauty of the place was still a new thing, he'd been confident they could get in, find the exit, and be home in time for dinner. But the deeper they went, the more the forest closed in around him. The mist made it difficult to see more than a foot in any direction, and moss-covered rocks seemed determined to twist his ankle. More than once he'd been forced to steady himself on the rough bark of a tree, and his hands now left small trails of blood on everything he touched. Additionally, Weiss was proving to be a spectacularly poor traveling companion. Unhindered by either terrain or physical effort, he spent most of his time urging NieR to pick up the pace and grumbling about their slow progress.

Finally, after Weiss muttered something about legless turtles being more adept at navigating the environment, NieR snapped.

> "You know what, Weiss?" he cried. "Go to hell. We're stopping.
> I need to rest for a few minutes before I throw up."

NieR leaned against a tree and tried to stretch the knots from his back.

> "How can this stupid forest be so goddamn big?" he muttered to himself.

The moment the words tumbled from his mouth; a cacophony of insects sprang to life. As if infuriated by his lack of respect, every imaginable form of buzz, click, and hiss roared out with a volume that rattled his teeth.

NieR slapped his hands over his ears and screamed to be heard. “Weiss! What the hell is going on?”

NieR could see Weiss’s mouth moving, but he might as well have been shouting in a tornado. The insects screamed. The forest howled. And then, just as NieR’s ears seemed ready to tear from his head and go running for cover, the sound diminished. Hesitantly, NieR removed the hands from his left ear and listened to the creatures of the woods.

Zree! Zree! Zree! Zree!

Shak-k-k-k! Shak-k-k-k! Shak-k-k-k!

Chk-chk-chee! Chk-chk-chee! Chk-chk-chee!

Woo-woo-wooma! Woo-woo-wooma!

Shik shik seek! Shik shik! Shik shik seek!

As the insect symphony dimmed another decibel, NieR began to detect patterns in the sound. This isn’t random he thought. It’s not just white noise. It’s...something else.

The insects weren’t just calling out; they were asking a question.

One with it suffers. Two with it is ideal.

Three with it is dangerous. What is it?

“By my pages! Is this a riddle?”

“I guess so. This kind of thing happens a lot in dreams, right?
Maybe it’s the key to getting out of this place.”

“Then, I leave it to you to answer.”

Inwardly furious that Weiss left the task to him, NieR sighed and gave the only answer that made sense.

“It’s a secret. Er, right?”

The sound of the insects stopped as suddenly as it began.
The forest undergrowth parted before NieR like rippling wave, opening a new path.

“These forest arthropods are making a road for us!” said Weiss with glee.

Pleased at passing the test, NieR moved on with new intensity. The path offered his body relief from the undergrowth but gave even greater cheer to his mind.
As long as they were on a path, their journey had a purpose.

“I guess the forest has accepted us, huh?” said NieR after a bit.

Weiss spun around to face his companion.

“Do not mistake the will of this forest for some happy pet you can suddenly befriend!
We have no idea where this path leads.”

As Weiss finished speaking, the pair turned a corner and found themselves facing a clear forest spring.
Smiling, NieR picked up a small rock and sent it skipping across the surface of the water.

“Good heavens…” said Weiss.

His surprise was understandable. Each time the rock struck the surface of the water, a musical note rang out. When the rock finally stopped moving and sank to the bottom of the spring, the ripples it left behind came together to form words.

I enter through the window, but I break no glass.

When night falls, I vanish. What am I?

“Absurdly easy!” barked Weiss. “Now answer it.”

NieR grit his teeth and tried not to reach out and strangle his companion.
He’s right, after all. This one is easy.

“Sunlight!”

A plume of water suddenly burst from the spring. Sunlight filtered through the trees and reflected off the plume, creating a shimmering rainbow that spanned the entire horizon.

“In all my years,” said Weiss softly, “I have never seen such a sight.
Perhaps I have misunderstood the intentions of this place…”

“Hey, look!” cried NieR, awaking Weiss from his daze.

“There’s a house or something over there.”

Glancing in the direction of his friend’s extended hand, Weiss saw a small cottage nestled among the trees.

“That’s weird, isn’t it, Weiss? I mean, who would build a house all the way out here?”

NieR walked over and pounded on the door.
After a minute of solid banging, the door cracked open and a small man peered out.
His body was cloaked from neck to toe in a large black cape, while his face was obscured by mist.

“Um…” began NieR. But before he could get any further,
the cloaked man held a hand up and began speaking.

I have four legs in the morning and two at noon, but I end the night with three.

What am I?

NieR tried to ask the cloaked man who he was and what he was doing there,
but he simply repeated the question.

“If we wish to engage this man in conversation,” said Weiss,

“it seems we must answer his riddle.”

“Yeah, I suppose,” said NieR. “Well, at least it’s an easy one.”

I have four legs in the morning and two at noon, but I end the night with three.

What am I?

“A man”

The mist dissolved from the cloaked figure as he spoke a single word:

"Correct."

With that, the man flung his garment aside, revealing his true identity.

"Y-you're the mayor!" cried NieR.

The small man slowly shook his head.

"I am not the mayor you know. Now listen to my words:
Long ago, I saw a version of you that was not yourself."

"You saw... Wait, you saw what? I'm sorry, I don't understand a thing you just said."

"It will make sense in time. At present, I simply congratulate you on cracking the seal of the Deathdream. Now you must go to the man at the forest entrance."

With that, the man turned on his heel and slammed the door behind him. As NieR watched, mist seeped up from the ground and enveloped the cottage, erasing it from existence.

When NieR and Weiss returned to the forest entrance, they found the mayor leaning against a tree. As soon as he caught sight of the duo, he sprang to his feet and scrambled over to them.

"Good gravy!" he cried. "You made it! You actually made it back!"

His left hand grasped NieR's and pumped it so fiercely it threatened to dislodge from the socket, while his right seized Weiss by the cover and swung him through the air.

"Gah! By the heavens, stop shaking me, fool! We have not even told you if we were successful or not!"

The mayor smiled broadly and shook his head.

"I'm just happy you're alive! I didn't think I'd ever see you again."

NieR withdrew himself from the mayor's eager handshake with a slight smile.

"We broke the Deathdream's seal," he said. "At least, I think we did."

The mayor's face beamed as NieR filled him in on the details.

When the tale was done, the three of them laid down on the forest ground and fell asleep.

"Wait a second! That's crazy! Why would we just lay down and go to sleep?

This is one hell of a story..."

"Cease your endless prattle and go to sleep, fool! Fighting against the rules of this place is futility itself."

NieR and the mayor obediently reclined atop the grassy earth.

"Have you forgotten?" continued Weiss. "It is words that control the Deathdream, words that allow us to move from place to place. No matter how unnatural they seem, the words are absolute. Therefore, if the words tell us to sleep, then sleep we shall. And once we do, the story will continue."

With that, the trio found their eyes growing heavy, their breath slowing.

"This is the first time..." began the mayor. "The first time I have felt tired...since I was...imprisoned...here..."

His words were cut off by a loud, long yawn, and he remembered nothing more.

They might have slept for an hour or a year. When they awoke, things had slightly more real quality to them. The mist felt thicker; the leaves greener... It was clear that they had awakened from their dream.

NieR shook the mayor's shoulder gently.

"Good news," he said. "We made it."

"Oh, wow," said the mayor in an awed voice. "We did. I'm back."
He blinked once, twice, as though not quite believing the sight before him.

"You two have no idea how much this means. The Deathdream had started to spread through our village, and I wanted to... Well, I thought I could figure out how to stop it, but I guess that wasn't the case. I must have caught the disease and become trapped in my own dream."

The mayor started to stand, then collapsed back to the earth. He stared at his logs as if trying to remember how they worked, then glanced at NieR and shrugged. Without a word, the fighter reached down and pulled the mayor to his feet.

"Real life may take some getting used to." A wry smile crossed the mayor's lips.

"You shall relearn in short order, I am sure," said Weiss.

"For now, you should return to your home and rest."

"No," said the mayor, swaying on unsteady feet. "No, I can't.
Some of the villagers are still trapped in the Deathdream. I have to save them."

The mayor slowly made his way to the Divine Tree in the center of the village, then bowed his head and prayed silently.

"This is a holy tree," he explained when the prayer was finished.
"It's the guardian of our village's history... and memories."

"Superstition will only make our mission harder," muttered Weiss.

"We should not put our faith in the gods"

The mayor shook his head.

"Not the gods: the words.
Legend says that our tree is home to a powerful magic known as a Sealed Verse."

NieR and Weiss could not contain their surprise.
It seemed a goal had been found in the most unexpected of places.

"I say," muttered Weiss, "this is certainly a stroke of luck."

As the three of them said their good-byes, NieR mentioned the strange man who had given them the third riddle and the mysterious words he had left them with.

"I once saw a version of you that was not yourself?" muttered the mayor.

"What in the world...?"

Lost in thought, he stared into space for a long moment.

"You know," he said softly, "this is going to sound weird... but I had a feeling I'd seen you before, too."

NieR tried to keep a straight face and failed, but the mayor didn't seem to notice.

"Déjà vu, right? Anyway, I figure it's just some kind of illusion created by the Deathdream.
It probably doesn't mean anything."

NieR gave the mayor a nod and a smile, but inwardly his thoughts were racing. There's something wrong about the mayor and his words. ... I wish I understood what the hell was going on here.

That riddle would prove to be the most difficult one of all.

Mayor: Oh, thank you so much! Now I can finally return to a normal life.

Weiss: This is one of the most bizarre diseases I have ever encountered.

Mayor: I know. That's why I have to help the other villagers, no matter what.

(NieR and Weiss say goodbye to the mayor and start walking away.)

NieR: For a Sealed Verse, that didn't take much effort.

Weiss: Yes...all a touch too easy if you ask me.
It's almost as if someone was guiding us to this village...

NieR: You think too much, Weiss.

Deathdream – A villager

Villager: ....

NieR: This must be another person infected by the Deathdream.

Weiss: It would appear that way, yes.

NieR: Gods, please don't tell me we have to go back in there. I'm not good at this mind-game crap, I'd rather hit something in the face and be done with it.

Weiss: Perhaps you should spend less time complaining and more time getting on with the mission!

NieR: Yeah, yeah.

I breathe air scented with death and resist the urge to laugh, for I know it will sound like the words of a madman. How long have I been in this fresh hell?

My box, my prison, is tucked under a stairway in the long-unused catacombs of some infinite castle. Outside, I hear the sounds of a funeral dirge that seems without end. Light has no place here. Wind is a forgotten friend. I pray for Death to come, but He forsakes me. Time passes. An eternity slips by in the single tick of the clock.

Someone knocks on my prison!

"Hey! Anyone there!?" I hear an unfamiliar voice say.

My savior! I claw at the door of my jail, embedding thick splinters under my ragged nails. I scream for help; I laugh; I sob. Surely this is a product of my addled mind! Surely it cannot be true!

"Help me! I cry. "For the love of all the gods, help me!"

Impossibly, I hear the sound of a lock being torn out and falling to the floor. As the door slowly creaks open, I have just enough time to see a silver-haired man and a floating book before the light pours inside. My eyes, accustomed to the blackness, explode with pain, and I am forced to turn away.

"Who are you?" I ask, shaking hands covering my face. "How have you come to this place?"

"I am Grimoire Weiss. This is NieR. Long have we been searching for you. Now come. Stand. We shall awaken from this nightmare together."

The one known as NieR extends his massive hand and pulls me from the cell. Though my eyes are slow to adjust to freedom, my ears are as keen as ever, and they recognize the staccato sounds of heavy rain.

"I never thought to hear the rain again," I whisper.

"Would that this was not such a terrible storm," said Grimoire Weiss. "Look at your feet."

I force my eyes open and see water pooling around my feet and lapping at my shins.

"There's so much of it..."

"Yes, and more comes each moment we delay. If we do not make good our escape, we shall all drown in this castle. We know that you are weak, but you are our only hope to survive this place."

Time, that long-forgotten friend, made itself known again. I nodded my head and swore to save my rescuers, no matter the cost.

The castle catacombs are a maze, twisting upon themselves as the endless entrains of a giant. I squint down the dim corridors and proceed north.

At the end of the corridor, I find a row of twenty gorgeous canopied beds resting atop a carpet of velvet. All are covered in a thick layer of dust and cobwebs. Searching for the door to the next room, I come upon a shapeless mass of gray matter. It has been shoved against the side of the wall, and despite my fever, I think I see the outlines of a door just beyond. When I reach out a finger and touch a piece of the mass, it turns to dust and drifts away on the wing. Realization slowly dawns, and I fall to my knees and weep.

...Corpses. I face a mountain of charred and crumbling corpses.

I look from it to the beds and back again until the horror dawns full upon me: Someone has piled these bodies into a tower and set them ablaze. Whether they were alive or dead, I do not know—and sanity will not permit me to consider the proposition further.

I make a sound, whether scream or laughter I cannot be certain. Then my mind grants me merciful blackness, and I find myself opening the door and leaving that most terrible of rooms.

I squint down the dim corridors and proceed east, north and north again.

At the end of the path, the waters rise to my waist, exhausting me bother physically and spiritually. I pray that this is the way out. Eventually, I can stand the sight of the waters no longer, and so turn my eyes upward. Imagine my surprise when I see a series of paintings hanging on the faded plaster wall! Each depicts a person in the prime of life, clad in clothing of the highest quality. The styles, however, are strange to me, leading me to believe that these people had lived long, long ago. One subject wears an outfit that particularly catches my eye. It is constructed of thin, breezy cloth, and decorated with a motif of flowers and birds while encircling the figure's waist in a leather belt of the most perfect construction. It is a stunning costume even by modern standards.

As I gaze at the portrait, I am struck by a desire to touch it with my own hands. Yet as I extend a single finger to the painting, I am gripped by a most unpleasant feeling. Staring closely at the image, I see it bend and warp into the shape of another finger. Something behind the picture is pointing at me! Is it another prisoner? A fellow inmate trapped for eternity in this place? I cannot let it pass, and so I seize the portrait with both hands and throw it into the water. The wall is hollow behind the painting, and inside I can just make out a body. Whether or not this is a prisoner, there would be no rescue. This poor soul is long dead. Only a small amount of the fabric has survived, but it features the same delicate designs that were depicted in the portrait.

I have been admiring a row of corpses, blocked from view by portraits of each victim at their pinnacle. Enough! Shielding my eyes, I paddle forward through the water.

I squint down the dim corridors and proceed south and then east.

At the end of the path, I find myself in a great hall with only the sounds of rain for comfort. The waterlogged red carped squishes beneath my feet as I approach the center of the room. Once there, I behold a beautiful dining table upon which rests china and silver of the finest construction, as well as the remains of a fantastic feast. As my eyes continue to adjust, I see many chairs surrounding the table, each holding a dinner guest. Noticing movement, I approach the chair at the table's head. But as the truth of the matter dawns on me, I recoil in horror. The host of the feast in a corpse, as are all the invited guests. An army of foul, wriggling insects have made homes in their remains, and this is the movement I saw.

This once-splendid feast was now nothing more than a requiem for the damned. I take a moment to steady my shaking hands, then slowly back away from the table. Desperate to lose sight of the abomination before me, my gaze lands on the chairs upon which the dead were seated. This is a mistake, for the chairs prove to be even more terrible than the feast itself. Each one is covered in a layer of spikes that run from the seat, up to the back,

and down the arms. This explains the color of the carpet beneath my feet. I can only pray that the unfortunate diners were dead when the meal began!

For if not, it is a simple task to envision the agonized screams that must have sprung forth from their mouths. My mind grasps frantically at the possibility that these souls had committed some terrible crime for which this was punishment. Though in truth, I suspect they had committed no crime at all... There would be no tomorrow for these unfortunates. This was their last supper.

I squint down the dim corridors and proceed north.

Against all hope, we make it to the front door.

> "Break it down!" someone cries, and so I give myself to the effort.

In tandem with NieR and Weiss, I slam my body against the thick, sturdy door. On the third try it gives way, and we find ourselves sprawled in front of the castle. The storm is in retreat. The clouds above are still dark and foreboding, but to the west, I can see a thin shimmer of sunlight trying to break through.

> "How can I thank you?" I cry as tears join the rain on my cheeks.
> "I would surely have died in there."

Looking down, I suddenly notice that my dress is in tatters, and sheepishly try to cover my exposed skin.

> "Your dress?" asks Weiss. "Then you are a woman, madam?"

> "Yes, I am." I proffer the two a smile. "I suppose that comes as something of a surprise, seeing as how I exist only in the form of words"

I can see that the one known as NieR is disappointed that the torn dress will be given no further description, but he hides it well. With a nod and a shrug, the three of us set forth to our awakening.

But behind us, an awakening of another kind is taking place.

Black smoke fills the abandoned castle, providing the countless damned souls inside with their final shroud. After a moment, the castle's windows shatter with a mighty roar. A fresh breeze blows through the hallways and corridors, clearing the smoke away for good. As we watch in awe, uncountable black shadows flicker to life, crossing to in front of the broken windows. The castle's dead have awakened to their new life... as Shades.

NieR: ....

Weiss: ....

NieR: ...You have anything to say about that?

Weiss: Hopefully, there will be no labyrinth next time!

NieR: I hear you.

Deathdream – Another villager

Weiss: And another victim! ... This work certainly is trying.

NieR: I'm surprised, Weiss. You're a book. All this word stuff should be right up your alley.

Weiss: Hmm, yes. Quite. ...Well, enough chatter! Let's be off!

A colony of massive sculptures was visible in the distance, their tall forms scraping against the sky.
Weiss and NieR had never seen such a sight, and their eyes widened as they tried to take it in.

> "Hey, Weiss. We keep walking, but those things don't get any closer. I don't get it. Are they really that big?"

As Weiss considered his answer, the sun beat down on them with renewed ferocity.

> "Perhaps they are some manner of mirage," he said. "Under this heat, a mirage or two would hardly be an unexpected sight."

NieR nodded and wiped the sweat off his brow, leaving a trail of sand in its place.
He thought he'd never been so thirsty. The ancient road on which they walked was black and cracked with age. Here and there, thin wisps of grass pushed up through the rocky surface, as if defying those who had laid this material down over their home. The heat reflecting from the road made NieR lightheaded.

Suddenly, he dropped to his knees and slammed his hand against the black surface.

> "Goddammit!" he said. "Is this some kind of joke!? Well, I'm not laughing!"

The complaining had already begun. Weiss tried not to let his eyes roll too much.

> "A joke?" he said. "No. No joke. This road leads to the City of Art. Perhaps the path itself is simply some manner of grand artistic work."

> "Oh, come one! That's bullshit and you know it!"

> "Possibly. But thinking of it in this way might make it easier for you to bear."

NieR glanced at Weiss's grinning face, cursed silently to himself, and resumed walking. As time passed, NieR's feet grew more painful, and his throat drier than he thought possible. He tried not to look further than the next step ahead, because the bright sunlight made him hesitant to trust his own senses.

> "We are definitely getting closer," said Weiss in an effort to cheer his companion.
> "Yes, this much is certain."

Encouraged, NieR lifted his gaze. Suddenly, he stopped walking, choosing instead to stand in the middle of the road with his mouth and eyes wide open and his finger pointing in the distance.

> "Water!" he cried! "It's water!"

> "Water?" asked Weiss. "Preposterous, I don't see any water."

> "It's right there, idiot! Can't you see it!? Look, the sun is reflecting off it!"

Without waiting for a response, NieR sprang to life and bounded toward the sight.

> "What in the..."

There was no water. There was nothing but sand in every direction.
Gestalt closed his eyes and sighed as Weiss floated up behind him, chuckling softly.

> "I believe this is known as a mirage," he said.
> "Many a desert traveler has spoken of such things."

NieR shook his head, bewildered. Suddenly he pointed off in the distance, his eyes wide once more.

"Wait, there it is! I just missed it! Look, *it's right there!*"

NieR sprinted off again, leaving Weiss with no choice but to follow.
After a few minutes of running, Niger came to a halt.

"I could've sworn it was right around here..."

Confused, he put his hands up to his eyes and rubbed them vigorously. As soon as he stopped, he noticed a blue shimmering pool of clear water just over the next rise. With a shout, he bounded off in search of it. The chase continued for nearly an hour until an exasperated Weiss finally floated up to NieR and struck him in the face with his cover.

"You dawn, blithering idiot! Stop this at once! *There is no water here!*"

NieR's face clouded. "There...there isn't?"

"There is not! And perhaps next time you will listen to me when I tell you as much!" Weiss paused for a moment, then continued speaking in a slightly kinder tone. "However, I suppose this mad chase was not altogether wasted: It seems we have arrived in the City of Art."

NieR looked up. Stretched out before him was a row of impossibly tall sculptures. Their journey was at an end.

"They're huge!" cried NieR, completely forgetting the heat and pain of the past few hours. "I've... I've never seen anything so big!"

Each sculpture was formed from rightly the same shape—a tall rectangle that stretched up toward the sky—but that is where the similarities ended. Most were covered with panes of glass that reflected the light in a thousand directions, while others seemed to be nothing but frames of steel. Some had tall spired on their tops, while others possessed triangular caps.

"What kind of city is this?" said NieR. "Where are the people? Where are the houses?"

"Perhaps the land is intended exclusively for artistic use."

The debate continued as they made their way through the city. Miracles of artistry were everywhere. Great iron crates with wheels sat silently on steel rails. Beautifully carved works with lights of red, amber, and green dangled over every street. As they moved away from the massive sculptures, they found a great array of smaller ones. Some were covered in glass or brick, but many were composed of materials they had never before encountered. The sheer variety of colors and styles was staggering.

Unable to find a theme or purpose to the abstract works around them, NieR and Weiss eventually fell silent. On the outskirts of the city, they discovered three sculptures in the shape of humans. NieR uttered a sigh of relief as he approached them.

"Finally. I was getting tired of modern art."

The three statues were indistinguishable except for a single word chiseled into their right arms. One read Alpha, one read Beta, and the final one read Gamma.

As Gestalt moved to touch the nearest statue, a bird flew from the top of one of the sculptures. Alighting on the statue's shoulder, it emitted a brief, beautiful song that took the form of words.

Only one form is real. The others are false.
The real form will always speak the truth.
The false ones will only speak lies.

With that, the bird departed.
As if on cue, the three statues shuddered to life, acquiring color and form as they began to breathe.

"Hey, look at that," said NieR. "They're alive."

The triplets bowed low before NieR.

“Please!” said Alpha. “You have to get me out of this nightmare! I am real!”

“Stop lying!” said Beta. He turned to NieR and threw his hands in the air.
“Alpha’s a fake, you know. I’m the real one!”

“What a load of crap,” said Gamma. “Beta is a fake! Everyone knows I’m the only real one around here.”

Their respective pleas given; the three statues returned to their frozen state as silence once again enveloped the city.

“When you consider all of the statements, only one of them could be the real thing,” said Weiss

NieR furrowed his eyebrows and considered his answer.

“The real one is Beta.”

Though NieR’s voice betrayed a notable lack of confidence, he was relieved to see Weiss nodding at him.

“If Alpha were telling the truth,” began Weiss in the dry tones of a lecturer, “Beta and Gamma would be fakes. But in that case, Gamma’s claim that Beta is fake would be the truth, even though Gamma is a liar. Therefore, that theory crumbles.

Now let us presume that Gamma spoke the truth. That makes Alpha and Beta liars. In this situation, however, Beta is calling Alpha a liar, which would leave us with two statues telling the truth.

Finally, let us assume that Beta is telling the truth. If so, Alpha and Gamma’s lies would make sense. Therefore, Beta must be real.”

As Weiss finished his explanation, Alpha and Gamma crumbled soundlessly into dust,
while Beta sprang to life once more.

“Congratulations, villager,” said Weiss in a cheerful voice. “The time to awaken has arrived.”

“Thank you for saving me!” cried the villager.

He dropped to his knees and bowed his head as low as it could go before an uncomfortable NieR pulled him to his feet.

“Why did you have a dream like this?” asked Weiss. “Have you been to this city before?”

The villager slowly looked around at the bizarre objects and sculptures that dotted the landscape, then shook his head.

“I…I don’t think so. I mean, it’s impossible, right!? There’s no way I could have ever been to a place like this…but at the same time, I feel like I’ve seen it before.”

“Déjà vu,” muttered NieR. “It’s just like that damn mayor.”

The vague sense of unease that struck NieR during the mayor’s dream spread once more through his mind.

Weiss: …………

NieR: Okay, that was terrible.

Weiss: I am positive I have seen that place before.

NieR: Stop! I get enough foreboding crap from everyone else in my life. Don’t start, too.
Okay. There. Now all the villagers can wake up, right?

Weiss: Yes, if the mayor’s assumption was correct.

NieR: I think I have enough wordplay to last a lifetime, thank you very much!

Weiss: Yeah, I hear you. ...Well, let's go see the mayor.

(NieR walked towards to mayor's house, looking exhausted but relieved.)

Mayor: Oh, thank you! Thank you so much! Here, I have something for you.

(NieR receives a one-handed sword from the mayor)

NieR: ...Holy crap. I can really have this?

Mayor: Of course. It's apparently a weapon of some renown, but we have little use for it.

NieR: Well, we appreciate it.

Mayor: Thank you again for everything.

After the Deathdream – The mayor

Ah! Hello again! You know, I've been trying to figure out a way to thank you for saving me, and I think I've got it. We're going to put up a statue of you! It will be ten feet high and made of pure gold. Oh, and I know you don't own a horse, but I think we'll put you on one anyway. Horses just make people look more heroic; you know?

How's that? You don't want a statue? Oh. I thought you'd really enjoy it.

Regardless, thanks to your tireless efforts, our village is at peace once more. Ant at peas. Ah hah hah! That's a little agricultural joke right there.

Anyway, I've been thinking about other things besides bad jokes and statues. I've also decided that we need to start holding the village festival again. We used to have it every year, but the last mayor thought it was old-fashioned or something and he killed it. That's not abusing my power or anything, is it?

What's that? You want to hear about the festival? Well, the official name is The Feast of the Three Days. We call it that because everyone sits around a huge table and eats for three days straight. No sleeping allowed! Oh, and we hold it on the foggiest days of the year, so it's hard to tell what you're eating. Some of the dishes are delicious, some are really rare and...well, there's some weird stuff in them. Let's leave it at that. Anyway, you'd be surprised what you can eat when you haven't slept for a couple of days.

I'll make sure that a room is prepared for you so you can be the guest of hon— What? You can't come? You have to wash your hair? Oh. All right. Well, I guess that's understandable. What with the adventuring and all?

Truthfully, I think this town needs more group bonding activities like that. It'll help us to know each other, and promote unity in times of crisis and so forth.

Weiss coughed loudly.

How much longer must we bear the insufferable flapping of this fool's gums? He whispered to NieR.

Ah, let him talk. He just woke up; guy probably has a lot on his mind.

Weiss signed. This must be what Popola meant by bright and talkative...

After the Deathdream – The female villager

Oh! It's you! Can I talk to you for a minute? Here, over here. There are my neighbors. I was just telling them about the dream I had. You know? The one you rescued me from?

... They don't believe me. They say I'm making the whole thing up. Who could invent something like that? I remember the darkness. I remember the screams. Listen, you have to back me up here. They think I'm crazy. They need to understand.

Tell them how you pulled me out of that cell and there was water everywhere, and how it was rising so quickly. Part of me was convinced you had rescued me only to let me drown, you know? I don't want to drown. People talk about how it's peaceful, but I think they're lying.

And tell them about the bodies. The bodies... Oh gods, there were so many of them... There was the room with the beds and the corpses. Like pieces of charcoal... I keep thinking about the fire and how hot it must have been, but then I don't want to remember it anymore, so I think about the wine. Only it wasn't wine; it was blood, and it was still warm. Sometimes I can still smell it. I'll be eating a piece of pie or something, and all I can smell is that warm blood mixing with the rising water. It's hard to eat now.

When I see a table, I think about that feast, and the guests, and how the carpet squished beneath my feet when I walked. I don't know. It's weird. The pictures are maybe the worst. I keep wondering if they knew they were going to die, and how they could sit still knowing that each stroke of the brush is a step closer to death. I think about stuff like that a lot now. Actually, I have a hard time thinking about anything else. I don't sleep much. Sleep is hard. I see such terrible things when I close my eyes.

Anyway, I was hoping you could tell my neighbors so they'd... Hmm? Where did they go?

They left a while ago, said NieR quietly.

Doubtless, they find your dream a bit...disturbing, said Weiss. Perhaps you could find something else to talk about with them, mmm? Such as the weather. Or kittens.

The villager smiled softly at NieR, but the smile soon faded from her face. As the two of them slowly backed away, they could see tears beginning to fall from the corners of her eyes.

After the Deathdream – The male villager

Oh, hey! It's you! The guy who saved me from that crazy city! It's great to talk to you again. You're my hero, you know that? Oh, come on, don't be shy. It's all right. The mayor even said we're going to build you a statue and everything!

I hear you've been traveling the world. Good for you! Travel is the key to happiness, you know? Getting out in the world, meeting your fellow humans face-to-face... It really changes the way you see things. I think a change like that will be vital in the new world that's coming. How's that? Me? No, I've never traveled. Never left this village, to tell you the truth. Still, I'd like to get out someday.

I think our world is dying. Seriously! Think about it! You've got the Black Scrawl, the Shades, the mysterious illnesses like the Deathdream... It's like something is trying to give us a warning. In fact, I'm sure this is a warning. We need to change our ways before it's too late!

I'd like to help change the world, but I'm just a simple villager. Not like you guys! You're on the front lines of everything, rushing in with swords and magic spells and stuff like that. Hey, I know! Maybe we can join forces and change the world together! I mean, with your experience and talent and my...uh...well, whatever I have. Anyway, I think we could really make a difference.

This world needs a leader; someone who can unite the people in common purpose. He'd probably have to be kind of tough, too. I mean, this isn't a world that appreciates calm discussions, you know? He'd also need to be smart, and have the ability to look down the road and think about what's best for the future. I bet you'd be perfect! Whaddya say!?

…Huh? You think I should do it? Oh, no! No, that's not… I mean, thanks and everything, but no thanks. I'm not a public limelight kind of guy. I'd rather hand around the background and help from there. You know! Like an advisor or a puppet master or whatever they're called. I think I'd be pretty good at that!

NieR and Weiss left before the villager could hand a copy of his pamphlet, "Ten Simple Ways to Save the World." As they walked, Weiss pondered openly about the man. "I suppose he is what they call an armchair general."

The Divine Tree's memories

After five years, NieR finally comes back to the Forest of Myth.

Weiss:	This is the village from the dream.
NieR:	Yeah…
Weiss:	Truly a nightmare I hope never to experience again!
NieR:	I hear you.
	(NieR and Weiss are approaching the mayor. He's standing in front of his tree-house like always.)
Mayor:	Oh hello! Hi there! How are things? …Huh? You want to know if anything unusual is happening?
	Well, I have been feeling a rather strange presence whenever I visit the Divine Tree.
NieR:	The Divine Tree?
Mayor:	Yes, you know, the legendary tree that exists in the heart of our village.
Weiss:	Did you investigate the cause of this…presence?
Mayor:	Uh…not really, no.
Weiss:	And why not?
Mayor:	Well, we're not… we're not really supposed to go near the tree, except for prayer.
Weiss:	And why is THAT!?
Mayor:	I don't know, all right! It's just how things have always been.
NieR:	…Weird.
	(NieR proceeds in direction of the tree with a bit of apprehension. After this, he starts to examine the tree. After a while, he finally starts to speak)
NieR:	Everything seems normal here.
Weiss:	We appear to have hit a dead end. Hold a moment. What is that on the ground?
NieR:	Just some funny-looking berries.
Weiss:	I'd wager those berries are poisonous.
NieR:	Maybe, but I'm not hungry enough to find out.

(Just when NieR and Weiss start to walk away, they're struk by an ominous voice.)

???: We are the grass...We are the trees...We are the woods...

Weiss: ......
Why do we seem to encounter nothing but odd people lately?

NieR: You should talk, Weiss.

Weiss: Pah! As if Grimoire Weiss is capable of spouting such nonsense!

NieR: Hang on. I don't think he's done.

???: ...The dark form that governs all memories.
...May the words form themselves to your liking.

NieR: That would be nice.

Black. Pure darkness. Painted over everything.

Words. Scattered here and there across the blackness. Kind words. Difficult words. Amorous words. All sparkling in the dark like jewels.

The words were few now. But time was shorter.
Grabbing the words in desperation, the tree turned to the sky.

This is wrong, whispered the tree in the voice on wind through the leaves. *This is not how it was supposed to be. ...The plan has failed.*

Once, long ago, the tree had remembered everything about the world. This was its task. Its purpose. It shivered with something approaching joy as it collected the memories of mankind. This was no accident; emotions were as much a part of the tree as root and bark.

Memories collected like dew on the thick green leaves of the tree.

And once they had formed a web that spanned the entire world.

Words collapsed into sunlight before passing through the leaves and into the pool of memory. From the pool, the words, joined together to form colonies, the colonies united into whirlpools of light, and the light coalesced into starts. Each star was like a child of the tree, and it loved them all.

Look at my memory.

A child is here, brought low by disease. He is far too young to have suffered so. Thin beyond words, the boy's skin is a shade paler than the bleached hospital sheets upon which he lies. His parents no longer visit him, for they cannot bear to watch him suffer. The doctors have long since surrendered his fate to the gods.
The boy, too, has abandoned hope. Strange emotions—weariness, hatred—swell within the dark recesses of his young heart. He tries to reject the black terror that germinates in his body, but no amount of effort or tears can drive the invader away. He has long ceased to resent his parents and doctors. Once he did, but now his pain is so great that there is little room in his heart to think of others.
Only one person brings the boy comfort: a healthy young girl with tan skin and deep green eyes. She was a beacon of brightness and light in the boy's world; her very presence is a comfort to him. But he is unable to look upon her face. Whenever they meet, the boy is filled with loathing for his own stat. Soon, this loathing eats away at what joy he receives from the girl's visits.
The girl will stop coming. He knows this. His every waking moment is spent in fear of this day.
He thinks that if he could talk to her if he could tell her of his feelings, that this might not be so. But this conversation never happens.

The girl disappears.
The boy dies alone.

The tree scoops up this memory and carefully stores it within itself.
Etched upon it is a single word: Envy.

Look at my memory.

There is a female warrior.
Her greatest enemy is a beast with red eyes that she cannot fully comprehend. When she strikes it with her sword, it turns into a pillar of salt and dies.
But when the white smoke clears, a new enemy rises.
And another.
...And another.

The warrior knows that her struggle is folly, but fighting the unending stream of enemies fills her with a sense of joy and purpose.

Somewhere deep in the warrior's drug-addled mind lies a vague memory of a daughter. Perhaps the child exists only in her head; the dying remnants of a powerful dream. She does not know.

Her friends and fellow warriors come and go. Some flee in terror. Some are eaten. She began the fight with 23 companions, but most are gone now.

The warrior's body shudders. She does not understand why at first.

By the time she hears the fierce, low sound, the arena is already enclosed in darkness. Looking up, the warrior sees a beast so large that it blots out the sky.
She is laughing. She has been doing so for as long as she can remember.
Covered in blood and dirt, the warrior laughs. She laughs and laughs until the town that contains her daughter collapses into a pile of dust.

This memory has been stored for a long time. It is etched with a single: Loss.

Look at my memory.

A red dragon falls from the heavens...

Ah, that memory has been lost. A shame. It was a favorite of mine.

After many centuries of existence, the tree saw that its carefully labeled memories were beginning to dwindle. Once seemingly infinite, the memories now seemed ready to disappear forever.

The tree did not feel sadness at this; grief was an emotion beyond its comprehension. It did, however, have a distinct feeling that something was missing. The mountain of memories it had so carefully assembled had disappeared. The three stretched its branches as far as it could, but new memories refused to flow.

The pool of memories was a black, empty pit; a hollow place where life had once flourished. The tree had lost its purpose. There was nothing to be done but sift through the new remaining memories littering the ground under its branches. Therefore the tree was pleased when the man and his companion entered the room.

NieR: Well, this is gloomy as hell.

The room NieR had entered was almost completely empty. All he could see were a few crystals scattered haphazardly on the ground. Picking up one of the crystals and peering into it, NieR suddenly saw a familiar

sight.
It was the Forest of Myth—its villager's prisoners of their own dreams.

I apologize, the tree though. That is all that remains.

As NieR stared at the jewel, bewildered, a voice suddenly called out from the depths of his mind. The voice implored them to listen. It was an order. Following it was mandatory. Abruptly the pair realized that they must listen. They m us t li st en!

Weiss: Look.

A small, shadowy presence appeared from beneath the floor. It looked to be a Shade. The Shade grasped several jewels in its hand. More jewels tumbled out of its mouth like shards of broken teeth, sights and sounds tinkling from each one before vanishing forever. The creature was abusing the memories, treating the precious objects like a collection of cheap playroom toys.

Weiss: This Shade appears to be consuming the memories.

NieR: That little thing? It's barely worth my time to kill.

The tree extended a branch toward NieR. Without a second thought, NieR brought his blade down on the Shade, tearing its stomach wide. Jewels from the Shade and poured across the chamber floor.

Look, thought the tree. *There is the Conviction memory I had lost. And Satisfaction. And many others as well. Yes, this is good.*

The tree opened its mouth and attempted to speak, but no sound emerged. A millennium of silence and solitude had caused the tree to forget certain things. But rather than be upset, it greeted the development with good cheer. Focusing all its power on the riddle of speech, the tree formed a kind of makeshift vocal cord and tried again.

"Ahem! I... I implore... *HACK*!"

It spat out a glimmering green jewel.

Hmmm... One more time.

"I implore you."

There we are.

"What was the color of the lost envy?"

Weiss: It spoke! ...This Shade has intelligence! And emotion!

NieR: Who cares?

NieR brushed Weiss's comment aside as his sword sliced through the Shade's right arm.
The Shade extended its remaining arm to NieR. *I must, must touch him. I must make contact.*

The moment its finger brushed against NieR; the tree felt a warm sensation begin to burn. Something hot coursed through its fingers, up to its arm, and out to its entire body.
It was emotion, more than the entity had felt in centuries. The tree cried out in surprise and joy.
One thousand years alone. One thousand years in quiet contemplation. The tree felt like it was going to break apart.
For long centuries, the tree had been alone, its heart sealed with heavy chains. But no more. New, powerful emotions began to take hold, causing its heart to lighten. This was more than the simple emotions it had been designed to feel: it was the beginnings of a soul. And the man was the key.

This was the promise made long ago. This was how it would be released. The tree's stomach began to throb in pain—a new and unpleasant sensation. But the time was not yet right.

"I implore you: How many were lost by the warrior who fought the red-eyed beasts?"

"Her daughter and 23 friends.
Okay, riddle time is over. I'm gonna kill this stupid Shade once and for all."

Something round and shiny fell from the open stomach and clattered to the floor.

"The key!" shouted the book. "Grab the key!"

The man's sword slowed. Time began to dilate around them, stretching and slowing. Time is essential. The next word must be heard.

The words exploded. It became diffi cult to discern their m eaning. The p ool of memo ies began to cr ack as infinite black ness burrowed its way into the wall.

Wei ss: Thi s world is fa lling apart!

NieR : How can a wo rld of le t er

"I implore... most important thing wo rld"

"Yo nah"

... ...
... ...
... ...

The light was complete.
The memories disappeared.
The tree's identity began to dissolve.

As the letters slowly faded, NieR was drawn back to the real world. And the tree was satisfied.

Weiss: What in the...?
I never realized that Shades were capable of rational thought.

NieR: I don't care if they can tap dance and play the fiddle.
Can't I just kill something without all this voodoo nonsense?

Weiss: With the tree defeated, we no longer need to worry about being buried in its world of letters.
Unless, of course, time itself begins to rewind... Hmm...

Kainé's Dreams

Discrimination

The sound of rain filled the village.

The steep cliffs that surrounded the area magnified sound, causing even the slightest drizzle to rattle like a thunderstorm.

Thin wisps of smoke streamed from huts as the villagers huddled in their homes and waited out the storm.

A single child, however, had braved the downpour and was now wandering slowly toward the wooden, hawk-shaped weather vane at the center of the town.

The wandered reached the vane, which had existed for as long as any could remember, and stared. The child's face was simultaneously delicate and fierce—like a teacup that had survived a shipwreck. Those traits combined with pale white skin to give the face an almost sexless quality.

> If the beak turns east, I go home. If it stays west, then I...I...

The child blinked. Rain slowly dripped down the young one's short hair and began its long descent to the ground.

> Come on. Come on!

The child felt a slight breeze and watched as the vane slowly creaked to life. Spinning this way and that for a moment, before it finally settled with the beak pointing firmly toward the east.

> East? ...Really?

Before the vane could move again, a jagged rock came spinning and tumbling through the air, finally striking home against the child's head. The force of the blow dropped the child to the ground as a hail of stones began to fall all around.

> Oh no. They found me...

A heartbreaking smile crept across the child's face as the stones continued their assault. Through the rain, the sound of multiple footsteps grew louder before a voice rang out.

> "Yoo-hoo! Kainé!"

The voice belongs to Dimo, worst of all the bullies in The Aerie.

As Kainé struggled to stand, a final stone came skittering through the mud and bounced against her foot. Blood oozed from a cut above her eye and blurred her vision, but she could make out the shapes of Dimo and his usual gang of idiots. The boy seemed taken aback for a moment by Kainé's seeming indifference to the blood dripping from her face, but quickly regained his bravado.

> "What's up, freak? You like rain? You like gettin' all wet? Or did you finally decide to run away from home?"

Though she knew it was futile, Kainé turned to leave. Before she could get more than a few steps, the other children scrambled to surround her, cruelty burning in their eyes.

Kainé knew those were not the only eyes on her; the tormentors' parents watched from the safety of their homes. She was attuned to this sensation- it was one she had experienced many times before.

While some villagers simply ignored the actions of their children, many encouraged it openly.

In a society ruled by superstition and fear, Kainé was something to be hated, and if possible, destroyed.

> "I didn't say you could leave, freak."

Dimo's words chewed at her like a worm through an apple.

He can't hurt me, she lied to herself, Be strong. Be brave. He can't hurt me. He can't hurt me. He can't hurt-

"Oh look! The little freak's gonna cry! What's wrong? Are you sad that everyone hates you and wants you dead?"

Kainé prayed for the rain to flood down and carry her away from a world that seemed to have no place for her.

But if there were gods, they chose to ignore her. As Dimo crept ever closer, the clouds began to thin and the rain slowed.

Even the weather hates me. I'm useless. A failure.

...I wish Dimo's rock had taken my head off.

Kainé couldn't meet Dimo's leering gaze; she lowered her eyes and stared at the muddy ground below. The bully moved forward until he was inches away. She could smell the scent of old meat on his breath.

The boy grabbed Kainé's face with thick fingers and yanked it upward. She tried to turn away, but he forced her gaze back and jammed his thumb against her eyelid to pry it open.

"You're a freak."

"N-no. I'm not."

"Did you just say no?" Dimo grinned evilly. "You don't say no to me. No one says no to me." Not even taking his attention from Kainé, he called to his cohorts, "Come on, guys! Let's give the freak what she deserves!"

As soon as Dimo finished, kicks and blows began to rain down upon Kainé.

Dimo paused, still grinning, as Kainé curled into a ball and tried to make the pain stop.

"I don't get you, freak. Whatcha acting like a girl for, huh?
Everyone knows what you really are!"

Kainé ignored the question, choosing instead to stare at the weather vane. It continued to point east, as if supremely confident about the future it had chosen for her.

Go home? Yeah, that's a funny joke for someone with dead parents and no home to go to.

"Freak!" chanted the children. "Freak, freak, freak!"

Kainé closed her eyes and listened to the rain, waiting for the pain to start again. As the clutching hands of the village children closed around her, she bent her mind to the sound of the rain, letting it become her world entire.

The rain fell...

But the pain never came.

Only when the laughter of her tormentors turned to terrified cries did she dare open a single blood-caked eye.

Kainé was shocked to see Dimo sprawled on the ground, holding his head, and screaming in pain. She could see blood welling from spaces between his fat, twisted fingers.

Oh my god. He's crying. He's actually crying!

Deprived of their leader, the other children glanced back and forth between themselves, as if waiting for someone to step forward and take charge. When no savior emerged, they began an uneasy shuffle away from Kainé.

But the young girl was the least of their concerns. Instead, their attention was rapt on the ancient woman standing a few feet away. After struggling for breath for a moment, she finally spoke in a voice thick with rage.

"Hurts like a bitch, doesn't it!? Now I suggest you scatter before I throw another one. And if any of you little bastards ever touch my Kainé again, I'll do far worse than throw a rock! You can count on it."

The old woman crouched down and gently touched the hand Dimo was using to cover the wound. Before he could think to protest, she ground her palm into the wound and twisted back and forth.

"Ow!" he screamed, leaping to his feet. "Stop it! What are you doing?"

"Quit whinin'! Ain't no one ever died from a scratch."

"You hit me with a rock, you stupid bitch! A big one! That thing coulda killed me!"

The old woman shrugged.

"Death is the best cure for stupid."

Dimo's face twisted with rage at her words. Locking his eyes on Kainé, he took a step backward and spat on the ground.

"Get out! Leave this village! No one wants you here, either of you!"

Seeing the old woman grab another stone, Dimo and his companions turned tail and ran. As they fled, the old woman grabbed her side and barked out a single laugh.

"Hah! Look at that fat boy go! Guess he's healthy enough to run from a fight."

The woman's smile faded as she turned to Kainé. Kneeling down, she removed her shawl and placed it around the young girl's shoulders, then produced a cloth from the folds of her dress and began blotting at the blood on her forehead.

"Oh, Kainé," she said. "Why didn't you fight back? You're stronger than that lot."

The words of her grandmother stung Kainé, and she turned away.

"Don't be nice to me," she said. "I don't deserve it. Nothing...nothing matters anymore."

Her tears, held in check for so long, finally began to fall on the muddy ground below.

"Everyone h-hates me. They think I cause bad things to happen. They think I'm a freak. I wish I was dead."

As Kainé's tears turned to sobs, she felt her grandmother's hands on her shoulders. Despite her advanced age and diminutive size, she was a woman of surprising strength, and Kainé found herself unable to turn away.

"Don't talk like that, Kainé! It's a river wide and deep that flows between the realms of this world and the next, and it grants no mercy to any that attempt the crossin'. You got a duty to fight until your last breath. Understand?"

The old woman tightened her grip and tried to still the tremor in her voice.

"You know the pain of losin' someone close to you, Kainé.
You know because you survived it."

As the words hit home, Kainé was struck by the force of her love for the old woman. As a young child, she didn't even know of her grandmother, but when her parents died, the woman quickly accepted her as her own. Grandma, as Kainé called her, was cunning, vulgar, and quick to violence- and their first few years together had not been easy. But with each year that passed, Kainé and her grandmother had grown closer.

However, it was only now, sitting in the mud with tears and blood caking her face, that Kainé truly understood the depths of her affection. Here was a woman who had seen hard times; who had seen death; who had fought through all these things and somehow emerged on the other side. If anyone could understand Kainé's pain and loneliness, it was her.

"Do...do I make you sick, Grandma?"

"Course not! Don't be an ass!"

Kainé drew her grandmother's moth-eaten shawl around her body and shuddered.

"But...my body. It's...it's not normal. If I was normal, then Mom and Dad wouldn't-"

"Hush," interrupted Grandma. "I'll not hear another word of this nonsense. You're my granddaughter, and I love you, and if folks have a problem with that, they can just go to hell."

With that, the old woman reached out and placed a wreath of dried flowers in Kainé's hair. The skill it took to bend the flowers without breaking the stems or losing a single petal was remarkable, and the beauty of it made Kainé want to cry all over again.

"Oh my gosh! These are Lunar Tears! Grandma, you made this for me?"

Lunar Tears were legendary flowers; most people could live their entire lives without ever seeing one. And yet her grandmother had somehow collected a dozen or more.

Kainé reached up and touched the wreath as if she couldn't believe it was real.

"Wh-where did you find these?"

"Oh, you know... Just stumbled on 'em one day while I was out doing the shoppin'."

The old woman turned away as she was explaining, leading Kainé to suspect that the search had been much more difficult than she was letting on.

The pains she took to construct the ornament- let alone track down the flowers used in its construction- made Kainé's heart hurt.

She reached up and gently adjusted the wreath, admiring the way it felt between her fingers.

"Didn't quite turn out right," said her grandmother as she squinted at it. "These old hands have trouble with delicate work. But it sure looks good on a pretty girl like you."

Kainé blushed and turned away.

"You...you think I'm pretty?"

"Course you are! What a foolish thing to say."

"Th-thank you, Grandma."

Her grandmother smiled.

"We're gonna be fine, you and me," she said. "Long as we got each other, we'll be just fine."

Kainé took her grandmother's hand in hers, and the two of them struggled to their feet. As they began the long walk home, Kainé gripped the hand with all her might, as if trying to stop smoke from drifting away on the wind.

The rain had stopped. Kainé stood beneath the weather vane, watching it spin in lazy circles, no longer caring about the direction it faced when it stopped.

I don't need to escape. I have a home now. Grandma loves me, and that's enough. Even if it's us against the world.

Kainé let her gaze drift up past the vane and into the cloudy sky.

The last faint hints of a rainbow were slowly fading.

As she turned and headed for home, the light scattered into a million particles and vanished, seemingly taken away on the breeze.

Daily Life

In the distance, Kainé heard the steady sounds of an axe striking wood. The noise had a purposeful quality to it, as if she was hearing a master woodsman go about his work. The firewood being produced, however, was as far from a work of art as could be; pieces of every shape and size were being flung about a barren yard with wild abandon. Anyone trying to stack such wood would probably die of frustration before the job was through.

> "...stupid piece of shit axe!"

Kainé's grandmother flailed away with the axe, filling the air with both splinters of wood and words that would make the most hardened sailor blush.

> "Grandma!" called Kainé.

> "What?!" yelled the old woman, taking her eyes off the wood for a moment. "Oh, it's you, Kainé? Don't get too close, or I might take your goddamn foot off by mistake."

She brought the axe down on a piece of wood, sending chips flying in every direction. One spun past Kainé close enough for her to hear the whistle, at which point she decided to step back.

Once she'd scuttled off to a safe distance, she cupped her hands around her mouth and shouted.

> "Grandma! Do you need help? I can get water or lunch or...uh...a new axe or something!"

The axe, poised to strike another wobbly blow, paused in midair. The woman considered her granddaughters offer for a moment, then smiled.

> "Hmmm...Tell you what. Since I'm doing such a piss-poor job of choppin', why don't you come here and take over so I can go get the water? Shades had been restless lately, you know, and I don't want you runnin' into one of them bastards."

Relinquishing the axe, her grandmother picked up a long pole with wooden buckets on either end. Gathering water was by far the more difficult of the two jobs, but Kainé knew better than to complain, Once Grandma's mind was set, there was no changing it.

Kainé did her best to help with the chores, but Grandma took every task that required to travel to the village. Though she had a long list of plausible excuses, Kainé knew the real reason: she didn't want her granddaughter to be taunted and harassed by the villagers.

Once Kainé moved in, Grandma decided to take up residence a good distance from The Aerie. Out of sight, out of mind seemed to be the best policy when it came to the villagers and her granddaughter, and rare were the days when any but the two of them could be found on the rocky acre of land they called home.

Kainé enjoyed the solitude, but harbored a secret resentment that her grandmother was forced to spend her golden years in such a place.

After watching her grandmother leave, Kainé turned her attention to the task at hand. She had never chopped wood before in her life, and soon discovered why the old woman hated the chore. Swing after swing of the axe produced only a tiny crack in the wood, and when she finally managed to connect a solid stroke, the tool embedded itself in the log and refused to budge. Frustrated, Kainé swung the axe around her head and threw it, long and all, across the yard.

> "Dammit! Dammit! Uh...crap!"

She suddenly understood the joy her grandmother felt in a good curse. Happier now, she picked up the axe, forced it from the wood, and resumed chopping. She had a natural skill with a blade, but the task was challenging, and blisters soon began to form on her small, pink hands.

> 'This is tough. And all my logs are weird sizes.'

Spitting on her palms and ignoring the pain, Kainé redoubled her efforts.

Just as she was developing a rhythm, Grandma returned from the village. Setting down her buckets with a small sigh, she took one look at the logs and coughed out a wheezy laugh.

"Pretty clumsy, girl! You better practice if…if you…"

Her grandmother suddenly collapsed to her knees, causing one of the buckets to wobble precariously. Eyes wide, Kainé dropped the axe and ran to her grandmother's side.

"Grandma!"

The old woman shook her head and pointed a trembling finger at the bucket.

"Get…get the bucket…C-can't let it spill…"

Kainé steadied the bucket with a foot as she knelt by her grandmother. A small bit of water splashed over the side and made a new home in the hem of her dress, but Kainé didn't notice.

"Grandma! Grandma, what's happening!?"

Crazed with panic, she grabbed her grandmother by the shoulders and shook. After a moment, the woman lifted her arms and batted Kainé away.

"S-stop that! Just stop now!" she cried, breathing heavily.
"It ain't like I'm dying! Just tired from the trip is all."

Kainé desperately wanted to believe her, but one look at the old woman's shaking hands and worn face told her more than words ever could. Her grandmother had lived a long, hard life, and it seemed the bill was coming due.

The time when her grandmother watched over Kainé was ending. Sooner than either of them had feared, the positions would be reversed.

The next morning, Kainé came to the side of her grandmother's bed and took her wrinkled hand.

"Grandma, you're sick, and you need medicine. I'm going to the village."

The old woman shook her head and tried to rise, but Kainé gently pushed her down.

"It's all right," she said. "I'll be fine."

Her grandmother fixed her with a gaze that could melt steel. After what seemed an eternity. She finally lowered her eyes and sighed.

"Well, I don't like it, goddammit.
But I guess I should quit bein' so stubborn and let you grow up."

The old woman watched as Kainé strapped on her boots and made her way down the road to the village. Hours later, as an unseen sun made its way across a dark and rainy sky, she was still watching.

Kainé moved at a brisk pace, checking her pockets every few minutes to make sure the money her grandmother gave her was still there. Every noise caused her to spin on her heels, making sure she wasn't being stalked by a Shade – or worse, Dimo and his gang.

But she encountered neither tormentors nor Shades, and Kainé finally found herself at the entrance to the village. The few adults she could see glanced sideways at her, then muttered to each other behind raised hands before slinking away into the shadows.

Her heart racing, Kainé took a series of rapid, shallow breaths and tried to calm herself.

'I have to prove myself. I have to help Grandma.'

'I…I have to be strong.'

She chanted those words to herself over and over as she slowly made her way. Finally, her eyes settled on a rotund older woman who was angrily waving her arms in the air and telling anyone who would listen exactly what she thought of Kainé's presence.

"Hey, lady," said Kainé with a bravado she did not feel. "Where's the apothecary?"

The woman's flabby cheeks shook in bewildered anger. 'How dare this...this thing speaks it me!' they seemed to say. But Kainé saw that her eyes held a different emotion: fear.

'Yeah, we're both scared, lady. Trust me on this one.'

"Which way?" Kainé repeated. The woman pointed at a small building to her right before hitching up her dress and stumbling off in the other direction. Kainé cringed, expecting a stone to come flying from the assembled crowd, but none came. Her mind was filled with a strange sense of pride as she made her way to the apothecary. But the new emotion had little time to take root, for as soon as she opened the door, she noticed a familiar customer at the counter.

It was Dimo. He'd clearly been sent here on some kind of family errand, because his gang of followers was nowhere to be found.

"Oh my go..." he sputtered. "I mean, uh...what are you doing here, freak!?"

The insult was delivered without force, and Kainé happily ignored it. Stretching on tiptoes to see over the counter, she asked the shopkeeper for the medication.

"Ha!" barked Dimo. "That old bitch finally keels over!?"

"Go to hell, Dimo!"

The boy's eyes grew so wide they seemed ready to fall out of his head. But before he could let fly a comeback – or worse, a punch – the apothecary told them to knock it off before he kicked them out of the store. Dimo slunk out of the shop, cursing Kainé under his breath. Once he was gone, she allowed herself to breathe once more, taking a brief tour of the shop while the owner prepared her medication.

Countless tiny bottles filled the cramped store, each with a label written in some indecipherable language. An ocean of aromas assaulted her nose, creating a scent that was exotic, but not altogether unpleasant. Seeing such a variety of supplies gave Kainé a sense of peace. Surely, in a world so vast, there would be a place that she could call home.

On the far wall, behind the counter, rested a portrait of a stunning young girl. The picture had once contained bright, vibrant colors, but time had worked its magic, and they were beginning to fade. The beauty of the work, however, remained undiminished.

"You like that picture?"

Kainé turned to find the apothecary with a small vial of medicine in his hand. His eyes were gentle but sad, and they seemed to stare through her and into nothing as he spoke.

"That's my daughter. I sketched it when she was just a little girl.
...she's been dead a long time now."

Kainé didn't know how to respond: she just stared at the portrait and tried to come up with the right words.

"Pictures are wonderful things," continued the shopkeeper.
"They let the ones closest to you live on forever."

He shook his head slightly, then looked down at Kainé and smiled. Handing her the medicine, he reached into his sizeable green apron and produced a handful of old wax crayons.

"You should have these. There's no one left that I wish to draw."

Kainé took an instinctive step back, causing the shopkeeper's face to darken.

"Yes, I've heard the rumors about you," he said. "It's a small village, and word travels quickly. Between you and me, I'm not sure which of them to believe...but I also don't think they matter much. I knew your grandmother Kali, and I think the way she was driven out of this town is just deplorable."

'Grandma's name is Kali?' thought Kainé suddenly. She was still mulling this new fact over in her mind as she reached out and gently took the crayons from the apothecary's hands.

“Your grandmother is an old friend of mine,” he said as Kainé scooted away yet again, “and I owe her much. I’m willing to wager that she would like it if you drew a picture of her. Yes, I think she would like that very much.”

Kainé murmured a quiet agreement, but inside her heart was bursting. Never before had a villager treated her with anything but complete contempt. It was a tiny, almost imperceptible step, but it was a step nonetheless – and with enough tiny steps, she might one day discover the rest of the world.

When Kainé returned home, she found her grandmother asleep in her bed. Her feet were blackened and raw - even bleeding a bit in places – leading Kainé to think that she had been pacing around the room until exhaustion caught up with her.

She placed the medicine by her grandmother’s pillow and turned to leave, but found the old woman’s hand clasped around her arm.

“Back already, are you?” asked her grandmother with a yawn. “Come here, let me have a look at you.”

Grandma sat up and examined Kainé from head to toe. Finally satisfied that nothing terrible had befallen her grandchild, she leaned back and allowed herself to relax.

“Well, how was it? Did those bastards give you any trouble?”

“It was kinda fun,” said Kainé with a small smile. “No, seriously, it was.”

“It was fun, was it?” asked her grandmother in a voice which implied she believed anything but.

“Uh-huh. So anytime you need me to run an errand, just let me know!”

As she spoke, Kainé removed the crayons from her pocket. After a brief explanation of their source, she informed her grandmother that she was going to sketch her portrait.

“A portrait of me? Ridiculous. No one wants to stare at a wrinkled old crone.”

“But Grandma! It’ll make you live forever!”

“Horse manure!” said her grandmother, throwing back the sheet from her bed. “Livin’ forever would just piss me off. Now put those crayons away and help with dinner!”

But Kainé would not relent, and in the end, Grandma found herself leaning against the wall of their house as if posing for a master artist.

Kainé took up the crayons and eyed her subject carefully...

Just as her grandmother was about to nod off, Kainé finished the work. After staring at it for a bit, she released it from her grip and let it slowly drift to the floor.

“It’s...terrible! It doesn’t look like you at all. I’m sorry, Grandma. I thought these crayons would...you know? Making drawing easier or something.”

The old woman’s eyes narrowed at her granddaughter’s disappointment.

“Let me be the judge of that,” she said, ignoring the pain in her back, and reaching for the paper. The sketch could have been a person’s face. It also could have been a boulder, a lump of clay, or an incredibly misshapen loaf of bread – all rendered in a chaotic array of colors.

The old woman stared at the picture for a long time, then slowly wheezed out a laugh.

“Oh, Kainé!” she said between laughter. “You truly are my blood! You’re as clumsy as me, and I love it!”

“But— “

“Hush. I won’t hear any more bull about how ugly you think it is. It came from the heart, and I’ll treasure it always.”

True to her word, the old woman gave the picture a place of honor above the kitchen table. In the days that followed, Kainé would often catch her staring at the portrait with a strange smile on her face – an action she interpreted as silent, mocking laughter. A week later, Kainé could stand it no more and asked her grandmother to take the artwork down.

> "Posh!" said the old woman. "I'll take this down when they roll me in my shroud!"

She pondered this for a bit, then turned to Kainé and dropped to one knee.

> "Listen to me, girl. Seein' this picture makes me happy in a way I've never felt before. And it makes me want to go on so that someday you can feel the same happiness."

It was a moment that burned itself in Kainé's memory: a perfect blend of pride and love and joy that came together to form a lifelong remembrance. She swore to never forget this moment: to never forget the old woman who had made her place in the world possible.

Time moves on. People and memories come in and out of a life like ghosts passing through a hall.

> 'But this moment will be different,' Kainé swore, 'because I will remember it forever.'

> '...Forever.'

Separation

Kainé listened to the sound of crackling firewood and stared at the black object on her plate. She'd been pushing it around the wooden disc for a good ten minutes, ignoring the bemused stare of her grandmother. Finally, she summoned her courage and gave the object a brief sniff. A sharp, bitter scent flew up to her nostrils and made its home there, causing her face to twist with disgust.

> "Grandma, I can't believe you want me to eat a bug."

The old woman threw some more wood under the cooking pot and snorted.

> "It's no bug, you foolish girl! It's a berry. Why in the hell would I be feedin' you bugs?"

> "Yeah, well, it sure looks like a bug!" said Kainé. "And I think it's burnt or something because it smells terrible."

With that, Kainé held her nose and threw the berry in her mouth, chewing as little as possible.

> "Oh, yeah. That's terrible, all right."

> "Why, you little brat!" laughed the old woman. "Look at the sass on you! You've been spendin' too much time with me, and that's a fact."

Five years had passed since the moment when Kainé's grandmother had saved her from the bullies. As is often the way with two stubborn people, their relationship had grown in fits and starts but moved forward all the same. Meals that used to be somber affairs were now filled with laughter and hurled abuse in equal measure. Kainé could not remember a time when she had been happier.

As the years went by, Kainé started to shoulder more of the daily responsibilities. Her grandmothers' legs grew weaker by the day, and she could no longer do many of the chores she used to take for granted. And so this morning found Kainé lacing up her work boots with a breakfast of burned berry rolling through her belly.

> "Where are you going today?" asked Grandma suddenly. Kainé looked up, surprised.
> The old woman rarely asked her for specifics anymore.

> "Well, I was gonna check out the kelma trees and see if they were ripe. I thought we could make jam or something. Oh, and I'm going to pick up some flagstones, so I need to take the wheelbarrow."

> "...Flagstones? What in the hell for?"

Kainé stared at her grandmother, then held out an arm and swept it around their home. Constructed mostly of cloth, rope, and rubble, the old place sagged like a boxer in the final round.

> "Grandma, a dying cat could chew through this house. I'm going to build a stone wall so we have some protection."

The old woman laughed, exposing her toothless grin to the world.

> "Goddamn girl, if a buncha thieves want to ransack this old place, let 'em come!
> We got nothin' worth stealin' anyway."

> "I'm not worried about thieves! I'm worried about Shades.
> People saw one west of the village yesterday."

The old woman tilted her head and stared at her granddaughter.

> "Well, shoot. I don't know why you have to do it today. We can worry about it some other – "

> "Grandma, no. If I don't go to the kelma trees, we won't eat tonight. You know that!"

A confused expression passed across the old woman's face, and for a moment she was a small child lost at a carnival.

> "Y-yes," she said after a bit. "Yes, of course you're right. I'm sorry, Kainé. Lately, it seems my mind is..."

She didn't finish the thought, instead, she walked over to her nightstand and gently taking the wreath of Lunar Tears from the drawer. The flowers' petals had aged to a brilliant whiteness, and Kainé thought it was more beautiful now than the day she first received it.

> "You're going to be a true woman soon," Grandma said as she placed the flowers in the girl's hair. "So that means less chatter about Shades and buildin' defensive walls and more talk about how beautiful you've become!"

Annoyed, Kainé reached up to remove the garland, but the look on her grandmother's face stopped her hand.

> "You're a beautiful thing," said the old woman, "and there ain't another like you in all the world. I'm very proud of you."

> "Okay, Grandma, that's enough goddamn compliments for one day."

> "Such a mouth on you! Where did that come from?"

> "Gee, I wonder."

> "I'll teach you to sass me, girl!" yelled Grandma. Suddenly, she lurched forward and grabbed Kainé by the ears, pulling her around the room with a crazed grin on her face.

> "Grandma!" yelled Kainé in a quaking voice. "Grandma, stop it! What the hell!?"

The old woman stared at her and blinked, then slowly held her wrinkled hands out as if it was the first time she had ever seen them.

> "Oh! Oh, I...I don't know what happened there. I'm sorry, girl. Sometimes my mind just..."

Kainé though the look on her grandmother's face was the most heartbreaking thing she had ever seen.

> "Listen," she began, "maybe I should stay home after all."

> "No! I won't have you stay here to keep an eye on an old codger like me. You go get your fruit and your wall and whatnot. I'll be fine. And when you get back, I'll have a nice grasshopper dinner waitin' for you."

Kainé rolled her eyes, then kissed her grandmother on the forehead and made ready to depart, trying desperately to ignore the worry that was gnawing at the walls of her heart. Kainé could feel the old woman's eyes watching her as she moved down the path.

'Don't turn around,' she told herself, but in the end, the temptation was too great. She spun on her heel for one final look and saw a small, bent woman standing in front of a ramshackle hut with a sad expression on her face.

'God, she looks so old now. It's like the wind could reach down and just carry her away.'

Kainé worried about her grandmother all day, causing her work to suffer. What little fruit she could collect was tossed carelessly into the wheelbarrow, and she only found a couple of stones before losing interest in the project. Finally, as dusk approached, she decided to stop for the day. Cursing herself for the lack of focus, Kainé pushed the nearly-empty wheelbarrow back down the path.

As she crested the final hill, she suddenly froze in place. The wheelbarrow fell from her fingers and collapsed on its side, sending a few pieces of wrinkled brown fruit rolling back down the hill.

Her gaze was transfixed by a thick black cloud that hovered just ahead. Tracing its path with her finger, Kainé suddenly felt her stomach knot in on itself.

'No. Oh, gods, no!'

Her grandmother's house was ablaze; the flames licking up as if trying to touch the sky itself.

"Grandma? GRANDMA!"

Kainé ran then, faster than she had ever moved in her life. Once she tripped on a stone and went sprawling into the rocky ground, but she leaped to her feet and continued running, unmindful of the blood that spilled from her wounded hands and knees. As she got closer and closer, Kainé's mind began to race in time with her footfalls.

'It's too dark. It's too dark. Not just fire. Can't be fire.
Too much smoke. Gotta save her. Gotta save her.'

She burst into the front yard and came to a sudden halt, her worst suspicions confirmed. The smoke from the fire was mingling with the thick inky blackness of an enormous Shade.

The massive creature supported itself on three twisted feet, and achieved balance through a means of a large armored tail. Scales, horns, and claws sprouted from its body in a random, chaotic pattern, giving it the appearance of a lizard designed by some insane god. Seeing Kainé, it let out a roar and flicked its tail. Sending small whirlwinds spinning around the yard.

For a moment the creature retreated into a shimmering inky blackness as if her mind was unable to comprehend that such a thing could actually exist. But then the smell hit her – a blend of rotting meat and excrement – and the horror became real once more.

The creature bellowed again, and this time Kainé responded with a scream of her own.

'All right, you bastard,' she thought as her scream echoed off the high cliffs around them.
'It's you or me. Let's go.'

The Shade eyed Kainé with bemused interest. Then it began looking from her to the house and back again as if urging her to look at the destruction it had so gleefully wrought. With the dread building in her heart, Kainé glanced toward the house. Through the smoke and flames, she spotted a small figure struggling to escape the ruins.

"Grandma!"

At the sound of her voice, the old woman began waving frantically.

'She's alive!' thought Kainé. 'She's alive!'

Kainé's legs sprang to life as she raced across the yard toward the flaming wreckage of the house.

Before she could advance more than a few steps, the Shade opened its mouth and let out a roar powerful enough to uproot trees and send them flying.

The blast sent Kainé tumbling through the air before smashing her against the rocky earth. Stars danced in front of her eyes as she tried to remember how her legs worked.

'Get up. Get up! Get up get up get up get up get up NOW!'

As Kainé struggled to her feet, the Shade stomped toward the house and pinned her grandmother to the ground with the tip of a claw. The old woman struggled to move the claw from her stomach, but she might well have been pushing a mountain. She coughed briefly, sending a small spray of blood into the air, then collapsed to the ground, her energy spent.

Kainé lurched to her feet only to fall back to earth with a gasp. Her ankles were on fire; one or both were surely broken.

Ignoring the pain that screamed through her body, she began dragging herself across the ground, leaving a drunken trail of dust and blood in her wake.

'G-Grandma...hold on...just a...little longer...'

Her grandmother's face was turning blue, her eyes rolling back until only the whites were exposed. Kainé pulled herself across the ground with maddening slowness, the distance seeming to increase with every second that passed. The Shade glanced between the two women and flicked out its tongue, its giant mouth turning up at the corners. Short, panting breaths belched from somewhere deep inside its core.

'Bastard...laughing at us...'

She had no idea how such a mindless creature could experience emotion, but there could be no doubt that the Shade was taking joy in their suffering.

'Yeah...I see your plan...'

The Shade moved its claw slightly, allowing Grandma to breathe again. It was clearly keeping her alive only to snuff out her life when Kainé was close enough to touch her.

'I'm gonna kill this bastard...'

Summoning all her strength, Kainé rose to her feet. There was a sickening snap from her right ankle as the foot twisted backward, but she forced it from her mind and began to hobble toward the monster. Pulling a small knife from the pouch at her waist, she leaped on the foot that pinned her grandmother and plunged the weapon deep.

"Give her back!" she screamed. "Give her back to me!"

It was like stabbing a rock. After a few swipes, the knife broke at the hilt with a dull snap.

The Shade panted laughter again, then raised its tail and sent it rushing through the air toward the young girl that was latched to its foot.

Kainé never had a chance; the tail stuck her square in the chest and sent her crashing into the burning wreckage of the home. As she lay on the ground with blood pouring from multiple wounds, a small, weak voice spoke up.

"K-Kainé...?"

Kainé's vision blurred, but she forced herself to focus on the sound. Finally, her eyes cleared enough for her to make out her grandmother's hands reaching out to her through the smoke.

"G-Grandma...?"

"K-Kainé...you've gotta...run...you can't...defeat him..."

Kainé grabbed the hands and held on with all her strength.

"Grandma...come on...we have to go..."

The old woman coughed loudly. One of her hands, slick with blood, slipped from Kainé's grasp and thumped to the ground below.

"Grandma, no...No!"

“I said run, goddammit. You have to...have to live...you have to get through - ...”

The thought would stay forever unfinished. Before she could say another word, the Shade’s clawed foot descended, smashing through the remains of the roof and down upon the shattered figure of the old woman.

Blood oozed thickly from gaps in the creature’s toes as the terrible, putrid smell assaulted Kainé’s nose once again.

She stared at the foot, dumbfounded, convinced that what she was seeing could not possibly be real. When the creature finally lifted its appendage, all that remained underneath was a twisted unrecognizable mass of rubble and red.

...her grandmother was gone.

Kainé blinked, trying to feel the hands which had been in hers just a moment before. For a fleeting instant, she could remember the warmth of that embrace, the trembling of the fingers, but then the sensation drifted away on the breeze and was gone.

Memories flashed through Kainé’s mind, one after the other, faster and faster until they became a meaningless jangle of noise.

Kainé screamed then, a thunderous sound that echoed off the cliffs and seemed to roll away forever.

The Shade eased forward, black ichor pouring from its mouth and dissolving into smoke on the ground below. The earth shook with every step as it crept toward its prey.

Kainé’s body slowly rose as if controlled by a mad puppet master. Her arms and legs were bent at impossible angles; her head lolled dangerously to the side. Yet somehow, she managed to stand.

Staring at the Shade, her eyes began to glow with a deep red fire. The creature, so confident just moments before, took a slow, hesitant step backward, trying to discern if this broken human could possibly pose a threat.

Kainé seized the moment. Laughing like a madwoman, she leaped into the air and plunged the shattered hilt of her knife deep into the leg of the Shade.

The Shade shook Kainé off like a fly, sending her crashing to the earth once again. Her chest rose and fell slowly as if a great weight were resting on it. Moist sounds of pain echoed through her mind. Something warm and thick oozed from her ears.

‘Is that blood?’

‘...think it is. Think I’m bleeding to death.’

‘...no. Can’t...can’t die. Grandma told me to live...’

Deep inside Kainé’s mind, something finally broke.

The sound, the pain, the smoke, and flames...all of it faded away until all that remained was a single incantation repeated over and over again.

‘Kill it! Kill it now!’

As the spark that was Kainé slowly began to flicker and die, she felt her desire to kill and her desire to live blend into one. The distance between heartbeats grew longer.

And longer.

And longer.

Encounter

Gently...weakly...softly...

The Shade, sure that its tormentor was dead, turned and stomped off toward the horizon, stopping along the way to bellow one final roar.

> '...couldn't...kill it...'

> 'S-so sorry, Grandma...couldn't...couldn't avenge you...'

Shamed beyond imagining, Kainé turned her head to the side, but only succeeded in coughing up huge gout of blood. It was getting difficult to see, and only after a moment of fierce concentration did she realizes that her left eye was gone. Laughing to herself, she turned her remaining eye to the ruins of her home and noticed a ragged stump of an arm resting a few feet away.

> 'Yeah, that's mine,' she thought with a mad giggle. 'This is gonna make clapping a real bitch.'

> "Ha!" cried a sudden voice from the depths of her mind.
> "Finally gonna die, are ya? Well, you had it coming!"

> 'Go to hell, Dimo,' she thought at the unseen assailant. 'Go to hell before I pluck out your eyes and feed them to a dog.'

The voice of her childhood terror evaporated into smoke, only to be replaced by another, more recent voice.

> "Hold still," said the apothecary, materializing from the ruins like a ghost.
> "I want to draw you. That way you can live forever."

> 'No. Stop. Don't want to live forever. Want to die right here.'

> "I see," he said quietly, "Well, if that's how you want it..."

The spectral shopkeeper fluttered in and out of existence for a moment, then produced a piece of paper and sketched quickly. After a few seconds, he turned the page to Kainé and smiled.

> "Since you rejected my offer, I decided to draw someone else."

It was a picture of her grandmother, real as life. Kainé opened her mouth to thank the man but stopped as the picture began to blacken in the middle. Before she could say anything, thousands of multi-legged insects began to swarm across the image, tearing at it with sharpened pincers.

> 'No! Stop!' Don't hurt that picture!'

Kainé reached out with her remaining hand and waved futilely at the air. To her surprise, the insects fell off the picture and to the ground below, where they vanished into tiny black tendrils of smoke.

Relieved, Kainé turned her good eye back to the picture, only to open her mouth in a silent scream. The sketch now showed her grandmother as she truly was: a smashed, unrecognizable lump of nothing.

The apothecary smiled, then broke into a jolly dance.

> "See that!?" he cried as he danced his jig.
> "It's perfect now! She looks just like you! Ha cha cha cha!"

> 'I look like that? Oh god. Oh god. I'm gonna die.'

> 'I'm gonna die.'

Drowning in despair, Kainé laid her head back in the mud and smoke of her ruined house and waited for the end to come. But just before she let everything go, an unfamiliar voice began whispering in her ear.

> "Ain't you got a wish, Sunshine?"

The voice was vulgar and fierce at the same time as if insanity had somehow found a way to take form. Kainé wanted to scream as the voice crawled under her skin, but her lungs refused to work. "Ya know, a wish? Like a prayer or something? Why don't ya get on your knees and start prayin' to heaven? 'Please, invisible man in the sky! Save me! Saaave me!' Kah hah hah hah!"

Kainé finally resorted to shouting at the voice with her mind. I don't make wishes! They don't come true for me! I'm a curse. A freak. I should be left to die. The other voice boomed in her ears. "Bwaaah hah hah hah! Oh god, you are the best!" Kainé glanced down and saw a black, shiny substance oozing from her legs. She tried to brush it away, but her remaining arm would no longer respond. The substance slowly crept around her feet and then began moving toward the rest of her body.

Is this death? Is this what it's like? Or is my mind just losing itself? She could feel the slime oozing upward, feel the hot searing pain left in its wake. Whatever else might be happening, she was still alive, and this was real. "Come on," said the voice. "Let it go." Kainé tried to ignore the voice and concentrated on the pain, but the newcomer would have none of it. "Don't ignore me, Sunshine! You're ready to give up, ready to die. So why not let me have it?" H-have what? "Your body! Come on, give it to me. Give it to me! I wanna stand on the ground, feel the rain, taste the wind..." The voice paused as if licking its lips. When it resumed, it was filled with mad, unabated joy. "And I wanna take your hands and use 'em to choke the goddamn life outta people! I wanna tear out their throats and bathe in the blood, just like before!"

In response, Kainé shifted her head and vomited. The warmth of it crept down her front and mingled with the pain of the encroaching black ooze. Are you... are you a Shade? "Kah hah hah! Yeah, maybe. What of it?" The slime reached her face, crept up past her nose, and slowly oozed into the socket of her missing eye. The moment it touched her brain, Kainé was struck by the most powerful sensation she'd ever felt in her life. It was ecstasy. She wanted to scream with delight, but all she could manage was a small, whispered moan. "Feels good, doesn't it?" asked the voice with a chuckle. "Yeah, what can I say? I know how to please the ladies. Now gimme that body. Come on, gimme the body and I'll give you more of this feeling. It's a fair trade." A black lump began to protrude from Kainé's side. As she watched, it grew longer and thicker, eventually taking the form of her missing arm. I can see better, she thought. My eye must be growing back, too.

The slime reached up to envelop the rest of her face, but she managed to brush it away. "S-stop..." she whispered, marveling at how she had regained her voice. "Stop..." The black ooze hesitated, as if considering this request, then quickly shimmered down her body before disappearing in a cloud of smoke. "Ah, what the hell, Sunshine!?" screamed the voice. "We had a deal! I thought you wanted to die!" "G-Grandma said... I can't die yet." A brief image of her grandmother, bloodied and broken, flashed before her eyes. She saw the Shade that had killed her and heard its mocking laughter, then closed her eyes and forced the image from her mind. Her whole body was quaking with rage. When she opened her eyes again, they burned bright red. "That thing took my grandmother. I have to kill it before I die." Kainé glanced down and saw a mysterious pattern - the pattern of the Shades - burn itself into her left arm. "Well, I'll be damned," said the voice cheerfully. "Look at that, Sunshine! I think you and me are gonna be good friends now."

Kainé stared intently at her arm. The more emotional she felt, the more the letters seemed ready to puncture her skin and begin infecting the rest of her body. The arm clearly had a will of its own now. "S-stop. Gotta stop..." Holding her left arm in her right, Kainé took a deep breath and tried to calm herself.

"Come on, don't fight it!" pleaded the voice. "Hate's my favorite dish, and I'm hungry! Let it go! Feel the anger! Burn with the fire of revenge! Thirst for blood, then go out there and—" "Shut up! Shut up and get the hell out of my body!" "Bwah hah hah hah! Your body? Oh, that's rich, Sunshine. Reeeeeal rich. Look, why don't you just up and die so I can have this body all to myself? What do you say? I bet those buddies of yours in The Aerie would love to see ya dead!" Kainé grabbed a nearby shard of glass and tried to saw off the Shade-infected portion of her side. Before she could, her darkened left arm grabbed her right wrist, crushing it. Kainé screamed and dropped the shard as the sound of bone-crunching on bone filled the air. "Kah hah hah! Stupid idiot girl! You're possessed now, Sunshine! And there ain't no going back!" The voice laughed again, a loud, long wail that seemed to go on without end.

"P-possessed...?" whispered Kainé. "Yeah. Possessed. You and me? We got what you might call a timeshare arrangement. Remember how folks used to think you were a freak? Well, wait till they get a load of you now!" Kainé looked up, tears in her eyes. The sky seemed smaller somehow. Darker. Is this because of that... Shade? Is this how they see the world? "So, uh, listen," purred the voice. "I know this whole possession thing seems a bit sudden, but it ain't all bad. There's plenty in it for you, too. I'm a very powerful creature, Sunshine. And now that power belongs to you. You got enemies? People you wanna kill? I can make it happen! That little fat kid who kept picking on you? That big ol' Shade that squashed your granny? We'll wrap 'em up in their own assholes! No more abuse for you, Sunshine! No more pain!" "W-wait," said Kainé. "You're a Shade. Why would you help me kill another Shade?" "What, ya think I'm some kind of racist? Some killing snob? I don't give a good goddamn who ya murder, honey pants. I just wanna drink from the well."

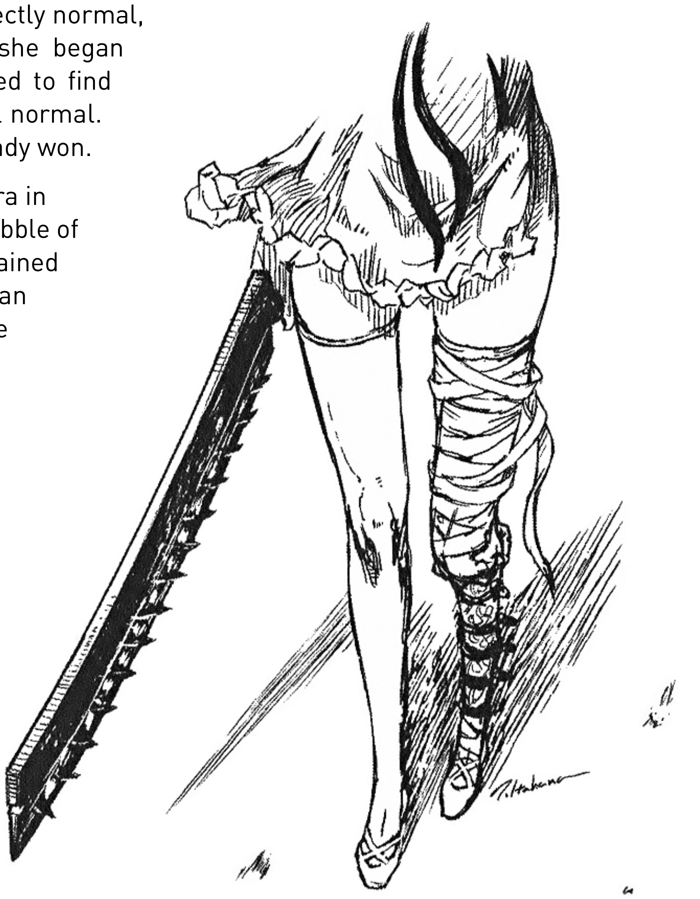
Kainé considered this as she struggled to her feet, the power of the Shade coursing through her. The smoke from her house was drifting away with the wind, and she enjoyed the way the cool evening breeze felt on her new left arm. After a long pause, the voice spoke again. "So, uh, how 'bout it? You and me? We could have some good times together. Look, I'll even take care of the bloody part if you don't want—" "Fuck off, asshole," muttered Kainé. "I'll handle the killing." "Bwaaah hah hah!" screamed the voice. "Look at you go! Oh, Sunshine, we're gonna have so much fun!"

"So listen, my name's Tyrann. And if you ever need me, I'll just be hanging out in this piece of meat you call a heart. Now get to it! The more you kill, the more your heart turns rotten and sour... and I like rotten and sour!" Kainé found herself nodding at the voice. "Yeah," she said. "Yeah, I think this can work. I'm gonna find that Shade, and I'm gonna strangle it with its own guts. And when I'm done, I'm gonna do the same to you, Tyrann. Count on it." "Hah!" laughed Tyrann. "I've shit bigger than you, so good luck with that. Oh, and hey. One more thing. Right now, you and I are sharing this body, but if you ever run out of hate, if you ever... you know? Go soft? Then I'm gonna take over everything. So keep on killin', Sunshine! And watch your back!" The voice grew fainter and gradually faded away. Fading to somewhere deep inside Kainé herself.

Kainé waited until she was sure the voice was gone, then waved her new left arm around a few times. It feels perfectly normal, she thought. It feels... like mine. Desperately, she began poking and prodding at the new limb, determined to find something wrong with it. She didn't want it to feel normal. That would mean the creature inside her had already won.

I am not a Shade. I am Kainé. Repeating this mantra in her mind, she slowly began digging through the rubble of her house, being careful to ignore a certain red-stained spot in the corner. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity of heartbreaking work, she found what she was looking for. It was the wreath of Lunar Tears. Though it had been through hell and back, the garland's petals were a bright as ever. Kainé started to place it in her hair, then slowly lowered the wreath and stared at it.

I'm sorry, Grandma. I'm so sorry. But I don't deserve to wear this anymore. I'm possessed. Corrupted. A freak. And this time, I don't think there's any going back. Holding the flowers to her heart, Kainé fell to the ground and sobbed. As night gradually lightened to dawn and the people of The Aerie arose to their daily lives, she remained in that position, as if tears could somehow wash away the horror that now infected her world.

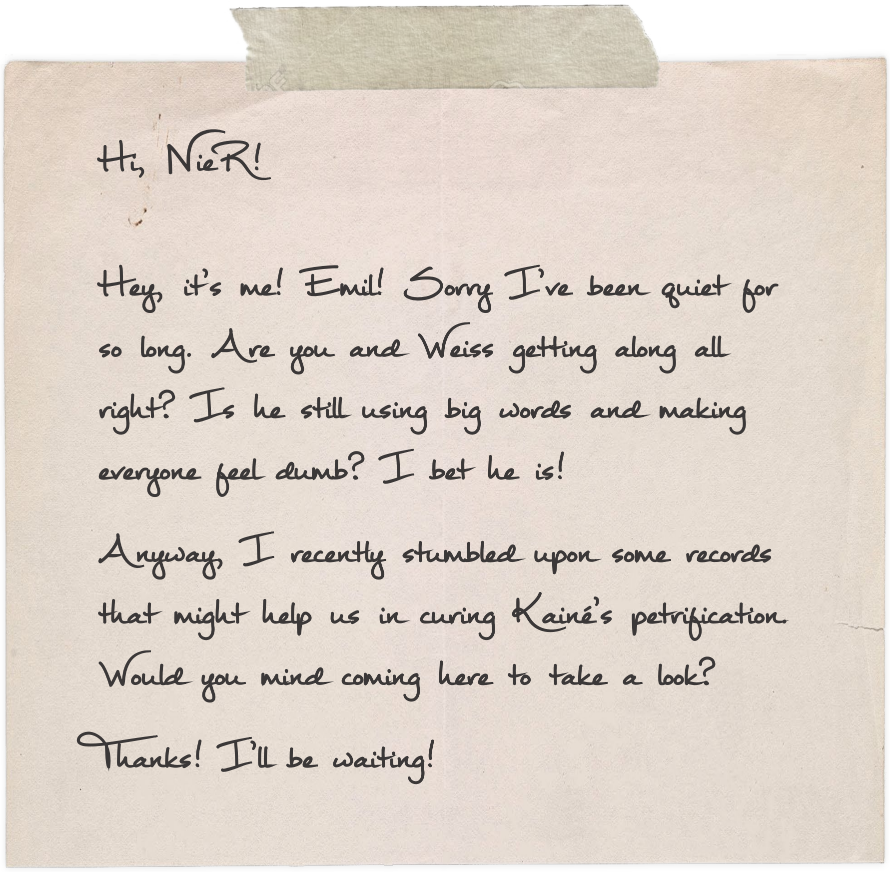




NieR Story Summary: Five years later

Welcome to the second half of NieR. It's certainly been a while and a lot have changed in the last five years. Firstly, Shades have evolved; some are using helmets and shields, allowing them to attack freely even in bright days. NieR also got an update, he is 21 and is strong enough to use two-handed swords as well as spears. His techniques have also improved. The villagers are scared, the guards are much more vigilant, they are closing the gates during the day. The Shades now control the Northern and Southern Plains, making dialogue and trading very difficult between villages. The wildlife has been massacred, only some goat survived. Rising child mortality rates, germs parasites, everything is falling apart. A lot of books were ruined after the ceiling fell inside the library. Only one thing is still there unchanged: Kainé's petrified body.

Devola is still singing from time to time around the fountain. She told NieR that Popola has a letter for him:



Hi, NieR!

Hey, it's me! Emil! Sorry I've been quiet for so long. Are you and Weiss getting along all right? Is he still using big words and making everyone feel dumb? I bet he is!

Anyway, I recently stumbled upon some records that might help us in curing Kainé's petrification. Would you mind coming here to take a look?

Thanks! I'll be waiting!

Perhaps the time has come to save Kainé.

In front of the mansion, Sebastian, Emil's butler, is waiting. He guides our heroes to Emil's room. What he found is indeed mysterious: an "Archival room" was apparently built in 2026 below the mansion and can be accessed through the "courtyard entrance".

A fountain in the courtyard possesses a switch allowing our heroes to undercover a secret underground research facility. Inside, dozens upon dozens of Shades are waiting in rooms and narrow corridors. At the end of the first floor, our trio discovers some discarded documents. Emil's seems uneasy about this. Thought each floor and each document, Emil is closer and closer to remembering the truth. Everything has to do with something inside the last room of the facility; a containment chamber.

Inside there, our heroes find a gigantic beast, nailed to one of the walls. Emil's memories all come back. He was turned into a weapon a long ago, him and his sister Halua. The nightmarish thing on the wall is Halua, also called Number 6 by the perpetrators. They soon lost control of her and the experiment was deemed a failure. So, they created another weapon, Number 7, capable of sealing it away. That weapon is no other than Emil.

Learn more about Emil and Halua is the short story The Stone Flower, on page 144.

NieR is very understanding of the situation. Emil is just Emil, not a weapon, not a monster.

At the same moment, Number 6 seems to come back to life, breaking free from its shackles and dropping to the floor. Emil gets swallowed by the monster willingly; he hopes to obtain its power and eradicate his petrification curse. Let's take down Number 6 and free Emil.

Only magic can be used against the creature; using a sword or lance could kill Emil, still inside. The fight is difficult, it unleashes numerous magical orbs that follow NieR around. It is also capable of walking in the walls like some sort of lizard. Using Weiss ability to knock it off the wall, and nailed the monster back onto it. After this, he follows up with a giant Dark Lance, killing Number 6.

Emil seems to have survived. However, something is wrong; his entire body has changed. His is now some sort of skeleton, with Number 6's head. Again, NieR doesn't really care and hug the poor boy. For the first time ever, Emil is able to see NieR in the eyes.



Emil Concept Art after merging with Number 6

Time to free Kainé. His new magical power is able to bring her back from her stony sleep. However, something else is brought back to life: Knave of Hearts, the beast kept inside the basement of the library for five long years. It explodes from its former prison and is seriously itching for a fight. NieR has become much better at this in only a few years. This monster is nothing compared to what it used to be. Our hero uses a pair of oversized Dark Hands to finish it off.

With that taken care, let's check on Kainé. She wakes up and gives a rather understandable shocked look at Emil's ghastly new form. Emil gets embarrassed and upset; he has turned into a horrible eternally grinning monstrosity. However, Kainé, just like NieR, is very gentle with Emil, she recognizes him despite the physical differences. Everything seems okay until Popola wanders over to them. She wants to talk to the group.

Turns out, the villagers are afraid of the band, and they want Kainé and Emil to get out of the village. Emil understands, Kainé is used to it, and NieR is very pissed.

That night, NieR didn't get much sleep, wondering about Popola actions, the ungrateful villagers, and Kainé that always had to sleep outside.

Learn more about Emil and Kainé's nights outside is the short story The Narrow Gate, on page 296.

The next day, Devola and Popola both are very sorry for what happened to Kainé and Emil. NieR also apologizes for getting mad. At least Popola as some good news: the key to find the Shadowlord might be in the Lost Shrine, where NieR found out Grimoire Weiss. Also, the trade waterway has been repaired. Shades don't attack on water so this is the safest way to travel between cities. NieR is invited to use it whenever it's needed.

After a few days to collect the materials necessary, NieR and his companions board on a boat in direction of the Lost Shrine.

Gretel's side of the story

Shortly before NieR's second visit to the Lost Shrine, Gretel is alone next to Hansel's corpse. After Hansel was destroyed by NieR, Gretel sunk into a period of madness, and for a long time appeared to have lost its heart. However, it was touched by the gentleness of the small Shades, which it once looked down upon due to its arrogance, and began to feel shame at how prideful they used to be. In the end, it acknowledged the small Shades as its comrades, and wished to become stronger to protect them. Just when it comes to this conclusion, a loud bang can be heard. This is the sound of trouble: NieR and his friends are coming...

It has been quite some time since they saw the room on that on the shrine. Weiss is almost nostalgic. They walk further inside the room when suddenly, Gretel falls from the roof. It tries its best to defend his friends but the little Shades and itself get killed in the end. I guess the power of friendship isn't enough when you're a secondary foe.

Well anyway, in the back of the room, our hero finds a mysterious stone fragment along with an old-world elevator barred by a rather powerful magical seal. Later that day, NieR asks Popola about the artifact they found. She explains that this must be the Shadowlord's Castle key. There are four other fragments like this to find: The one he got is called "The Stone Guardian", and he is missing "Sacrifice", "The Law of Robotics", "The Memory Tree" and "Loyal Cerberus".

Wonderful, all our hero must do is to go on a murderous rampage and gather the key's pieces. Let's start with the Junk Heap where we will find "The Law of Robotics".

Gideon's side of the story

One year after their mother's death, Jacob and Gideon are investigating the Junk Heap. The younger brother, being careless as most children, haphazardly skips over some loose debris in the derelict factory. This lead to the collapse of some concrete slab. Jacob makes a diving save to rescue his little brother from the debris. Gideon makes it out of the wreck with only a few bruises and some skinned knees thanks to his elder sibling, who got crushed beneath the rubble instead. While trying to get Jacob out of here, he pulls on his arms as hard as he can...until the arms detach from his brother's corpse. Gideon is mentally scarred by this event, at only 12. Out in the distance, he can see a P-33 robot...

Our group gets through the fence separating the Junk Heap from the outside world. Inside the shop NieR encounters Gideon. He has grown up in the last five years. He explained why his brother is missing and that he's seeking vengeance. He wants to offer a heavy sword in a bad shape. However, the weapon can be repaired if NieR goes get the proper material.

He does just that and returns to the shop. The reparation will take longer than expected. He will send NieR a letter at his house when it's ready.

Let's go check on the Forest of Myth then, the place isn't very far from here anyway.

The Forest is as foggy and mysterious as always. The mayor and everyone are there, no major changes in five years. Well anyway, NieR goes and talks with the old man. At one point in the discussion, the story of the Divine Tree is brought up: it a tree at the center of the village, bigger than any other around. The villagers seems to worship it in some way.

Further information

Gideon lost his left arm. He replaced it with a robot arm connected at the elbow. It isn't working, the technology is long gone. It's just there to make him look normal. The reason he lost his arm isn't explained in the game but in Grimoire NieR. After Gideon's death and tearing his arm off, he started cutting his own arm. One day, he went a bit too far and lost the limb.

The tree isn't too hard to find. Nothing weird to report. It is just bigger than the others. When NieR was about to leave, something very similar to the Deathdream happens. The tree has a mind of its own and has captured our heros inside. It stores memories of everything around it, just like a library.

After hearing the tree stories for a while, NieR decides he had enough and kill it. Brought back to the real world, he looks around and discovers a piece of the key at his feet.

You can read what exactly happened with the Divine Tree on page 249.

A week later, NieR receives the long-awaited letter. Off to the Junk Heap then...
Of course, Gideon offering a weapon and even repairing it wasn't without some hidden intentions. He asks NieR for a favor; to avenge his brother. Apparently, he was killed by a little Shade and his robot, a P-33 robot. Our hero isn't frilled about this quest but maybe that Shade has something to do with the key fragment they are looking for. He accepts and goes inside the Junk Heap for the last time.

In the depths of the Junk Heap, NieR encounters the robot followed by a little Shade. Amazing enough, the slightly deranged Gideon wasn't lying regarding a Shade/machine alliance. The small Shade screeches a command to the robot which causes the death bot to creak into action.

Kalil and Beepy's side of the story

Some time ago, Kalil along with his mother was chased into the Junk Heap by a group of Replicants on a Shade hunt. There the mother decides to sacrifice her own life in order to drag the men away from Kalil. The little Shade deprived of his mother is crying alone in the same room he was left out. One day, a P-33, part of the Factory Defense System comes inside the room and considers the Shade as an intruder. Right before killing it, the robot is intrigued by the kid's tears. Learning about Kalil's fate, the robot promises to protect him.

They spent some time together, becoming very close friends, and wanting to explore the world together. Beepy is very curious and learned a lot from the young Shade. Beepy is probably the first machine to obtain this level of intelligence and knowledge (except for androids like the Twins).

When Jacob got crushed, Kalil was actually worried for the boy and was hoping Gideon is okay.

The robot uses an all lot of attacks against the intruders. However, it wasn't the first time NieR was fighting against a P-33 model. They are slow and predictable. When the robot finally seems affected by our heroes' attacks, it kneels and stops moving. Scrap metal, debris, and general trash begin levitating through the air, around P-33 and his Shade companion. Some wings are created from the debris and attach to the robot's back. This P-33 has indeed gained the ability of flight. But learning to fly is another thing entirely; it hits himself on the roof, the walls, making debris fall everywhere.

The robot seems desperate at this point. It crashes, expulsing the little Shade from the top of its head. NieR kills it and finishes the robot using one of Weiss ability. The malfunctioning robot crumples back to the floor.

Gideon shows up and reveals his true nature; he is a vengeful, murderous, mentally unstable young boy. He hits endlessly the unmoving robot. This is not the happy ending he wanted, nothing can heal his wounds at this point.

Well anyway, NieR has obtained another key's fragment; only two more to go.



Fyra Render after the time skip.

Sometime later, NieR gets a letter from his old friend, the King of Façade. He is getting married and invite our heroes for the ceremony. This is a one in a lifetime offer that NieR cannot decline. Furthermore, that is some positive news for a change!

Inside the Royal Palace, NieR, Weiss, and Emil are welcomed by the King and the future Queen; she is none other than Fyra, the girl that helped our heroes back then. They are invited to stay here for the night.

The day of the wedding, everyone is gathered in the place in front of the palace. Dancers are throwing confetti. The King's Advisor is orchestrating the ceremony. The lovers kiss, everyone is having a good time...

As if this overall happiness has been deemed as excessive by some god, misfortune strikes our freshly married couple. A guard keels over dead in front of the palace, the wolves are coming! All the sudden, Fyra gets mangled in the Shade-Wolf's jaws before being slammed into a nearby wall. A pack of normal wolves join the party as the rest of the Masked People flees in terror.

The pack leader, Roc, signals an attack. Time to fight the wedding crashers. After killing some of the wolves and hitting their leader a few times, it howls a hasty retreat to its pack and they flee from Façade. NieR was about to follow them but there are more...pressing concerns.

Fyra in on the floor, the King's arms holding her tightly. She speaks for the first time to the King: "Thank you for making...someone like me...your bride."

Fyra goes limp and passes away as she finishes those words.

The King is devastated, crying, holding Fury's body even closer. When he finally lies her down, he is enraged, desperately seeking revenge on the wolves. He orders everyone to

take arms. They must die tonight! The Advisor tries to make him reconsider this foolish act. He retreats inside the palace to recompose himself.

The next day, the group comes to meet with the King. He wants revenge, even if he has to break some rules. All citizens agreed to his decision and a small army is gathered. The wolves live in a separate part of the desert to protect themselves from sandstorms. That's where the Masked army is going.

Roc is howling as always. Wolves immediately pour into the arena from all over the canyon edges. Most of them attempt to target the King of Façade, but his army is protecting their leader. Despite the wolves overwhelming numbers, Roc probably didn't anticipate the devastating abilities of our band. Emil is healing the fighters, Kainé creates magical orbs that kill any foe nearby, and NieR is using Weiss's Dark Phantasm to protect the King.

When most wolves are dead, their leader finally shows up. Unlike its peers, Roc is smart enough to know that NieR is the deadliest man on the battlefield and is focusing its attacks on him accordingly. Its main attribute lies in its incredible speed, dashing Kainé's magic and any projectile thrown its way.

When its energy finally runs out, NieR goes with a pair Dark Hands to project Roc on the corner of a stone structure. But the beast is not dead yet; the King of Façade decides to finish it off. He spears it right in the face and keeps driving it right out its skull, straight thought half its body, and into the ground. That is the end of Roc and the wolves. NieR obtains the Loyal Cerberus key's fragment from its dead body.

Sometime later, the King is mourning the death of Fyra in Façade's cemetery. Our heroes choose to leave the crying man alone, promising to pay him a visit soon.

Roc's side of the story

In the 2060s, Roc used to be a dog. It was raised by an old man, and underwent the gestalt process, gaining eternal life in the place of its owner. Due to its fond memories of the old man's care, it wishes to live in peace without coming into conflict with the humanoid Replicants.

However, it understands that Façade's citizens have deprived them of their habitat, turned forests into deserts, and killed many of their comrades. Still, Roc expresses further desire to live in harmony with Façade's peoples and even confusion as to why they are oppressed. In the end, however, he realizes that they simply cannot coexist after he returns from an outing to find most of his pack murdered by the Men of the Mask—pack that Roc sees as being helpless children. Enraged at this sight, he decides to lead the wolves on a battle with the Replicants and ultimately crashes the wedding party of the king of Façade—killing his newlywed wife Fyra. They are driven out, but they then prepare for a last stand at the wolf den. Roc asks his remaining pack if they would like to flee, but they all opt to die with honor as opposed to making an escape. When the king, his army and NieR attack the wolf den, all the wolves are slaughtered, including Roc. As the king of Façade strikes the killing blow to the pack leader Roc, he utters his final words...

"What did we do... to deserve such a fate?".

A few weeks later, Popola asks NieR to come talk about the Shadowlord Castle's Key. She explains that the Aerie's Chief has contacted her. They had shut themselves away from the world for far too long, and they have decided to change their ways. They have established a market inside the village and wish for everyone to come visit. Furthermore, Popola, allegedly asked if they ever heard about "The Sacrifice" (the last key's fragment title), and someone there claimed to know the meaning behind the term. Well, time to go again to Kainé's home village.

The village rebirth isn't particularly obvious. People are still shut-ins shooting insults and claiming the end is near. Well, maybe the Chief is actually the only progressive person in town and the rest are still mostly xenophobic. Apparently not, he has no idea what the letter, or the Keyword is about: this definitely sounds like a trap...

It just happens there seems to be some manner of gathering across the gorge on the second central platform. Maybe this is the market the letter was referring to. It seems some of the citizens have gotten together and opens a flea market. The shops aren't anything special; they offer the same goods as any other villages. There is however a blacksmith, which is always good news for NieR. After asking around and see if anyone knows who

forged that letter, they come to speak with a guard. Our heroes talk for a bit and the conversation drift to Shade hunting. Suddenly, the guard transforms into a Shade along with other nearby villagers.

Their instincts were correct after all, this letter was a trap. Turns out, half of the town is really disguised Shades. But, not everyone. There's still a bunch of terrified human running around. NieR needs to be careful not to slice them off while routing the Shade infiltrators. Kainé yells from across the canyon—she stayed behind to avoid coming inside the town and creating tension amongst the villager.

At this point, our heroes need to fight their way back to Kainé toward the front of the town, slaying every Shades and possessed human along the way. When they meet her, she is trying to kill... a young lady? What is she doing?

Kainé explains that the women might look human but she is a Shade. She slaughters the impostor.



Wendy Concept Illustration

While Kainé is busy being stunned by claims of being a monster from the villagers, the disguised Shade takes the initiative and hit our hero and make her fall unconscious. Following the brief battle, killing the last Shade on this area, NieR takes note of an interesting development nearby...

A maelstrom of swirling black energy is looking significantly more ominous than anything seen before. It's turning into a magic ball! The swirling energy explodes in an eruption of power and forms a giant ethereal tear. The thing is called Wendy and, in its center, a great big menacing eye is looking at our group.

Like most creatures, Wendy does most definitely not appreciate getting poked in its eye. The bulb looking creature keeps on spawning Shades with each impact of its long leaf. While Emil is keeping it busy, NieR is trying to get behind it and launch a surprise attack. It works and Wendy has lost his protecting layers.

This is time for NieR, with the help of Weiss and Emil, to finish this foe with a spectacular attack. Their combined power is able to pierce the entire thing.

While Wendy slowly falls in the depths of the canyon, Emil is still trying to catch his breath; he is acting strangely... A ball of pure energy appears around him and starts expanding across the area, engulfing, and disintegrating everything around him. Kainé wakes up just in time to see the village she grew up in—and has defended for years—get completely wiped out. When the incredibly bright light finally fades out, the only thing remaining is the eternally grinning Emil, floating in midair.

Wendy's side of the story

Aerie is really a weird place. Its people are all shut-ins, incapable of defending themselves. It is an unwelcoming, unsuitable, cold place.

It's also the only town around NieR's village where successful cases of Gestalt-Replicant "gentle" remerging has occurs. Those proper humans are the ones who set up the marketplace. Some Replicants also left their houses and joined the group. They are all living quite peacefully.

Of course not everyone agrees and some, like the Chief, are even more afraid than before. They are praying their impotent gods to save them and cursing at the impending doom.

However, the merging process isn't perfect yet, they are still unstable. So, when NieR came speaking with one of them and was talking about his quest to kill every single Shade, the newly merged guard freaked out and his Gestalt separated from the Replicant.

In one last ditch effort to protect themselves, the remaining Gestalts decided to merge into one singular being, resulting in Wendy. Of course, it helped them gain a lot of power, but fusing together into a big mass of collective consciousnesses is really good way to make Gestalts relapse.

After murdering a sentient Shade-tree, killing a robot and its friend, and droving wolves to extinction, their quest just led them to wipe an entire town off the map and killing every single person in it. The gang is notably numb after causing the accident, except Emil, who is sobbing over his actions. But finally, NieR has collected the key's fragments to the Shadowlord's Castle...and at the end of the day, that's all that matters to him.

With this last piece obtained, NieR comes only last time talk to Popola in the library. She might have sensed it; Devola is also here. They exchange a few words, the atmosphere is heavy. He leaves with his companions in the direction of the Shadowlord's Castle, beyond the Lost Shrine.

They have a little motivation speech in front of the entrance. "Let's all make it back alive, okay?" said Emil.

After climbing the entire Shrine again, they arrive at the chamber where NieR first found Grimoire Weiss. Using the Stone Guardian, the Memory Tree, the Law of Robotics, the Loyal Cerberus, and the Sacrifice, he dispels the magical glyph barrier and activates the elevator, leading down to the Shadowlord's Castle.

NieR and his friends emerge in some manner of ancient bunker. Pushing the massive gates, they arrive inside a surprisingly lush, modern atrium. Other curiosities like office building can be seen briefly behind the well-trimmed hedges. In the middle of the place, two doves are happily hanging around a fountain.

Strangely enough, our heroes are unable to progress. The doors on the other side of the atrium are locked. After wandering around pillaging some boxes, NieR approaches the birds. One of them speaks:

"To whom does the true form show itself? You must answer.

I ask: Why did humans disappear from the world?"

Our heroes are obviously surprised. Nevertheless, Weiss is quite fond of riddles, and is happy to show everyone how profound and knowledgeable he is. The bird repeats itself. They must answer.

Weiss speaks: "I answer: Because of a black disease."

"I ask: How can humans extend their lives?",

the bird asks. Again, Weiss responds with confidence: "I answer: By separating body from soul."

"I ask: What is the destination of souls?"

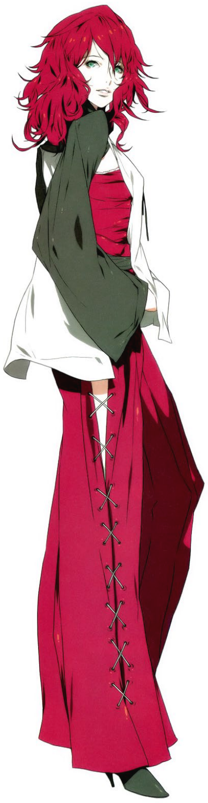
"I answer: They are placed in their corresponding shells," says Weiss.

"...Very well. ...You are acknowledged as master. You may enter."

Well...That was strange...and rather ominous. The group looks at Weiss, wondering how he could answer those confusing riddles. Anyway, they open the next doors. A vast terrace extends in front of them...and right in the middle...Devola and Popola are waiting.

A shock for NieR, to find his friends up here. Before he can even formulate a sentence, Devola asks if by any chance he could just... go back to the village. Of course, that's not an option. Everyone is here to save Yonah, to finish this unbearably long and tumultuous journey! The Twins helped him so much along the way, why would they ask this now?! Why are they down here in the first place? NieR is hopelessly lost right now.

As they thought, NieR declines the offer, and thus, the Twins prepare themselves to fight. Nobody can believe what's going on. Weiss even questions if those could be Shades in disguise or something...



Devola Concept Art

The Twins are able to use a vast variety of magic. They can even teleport around to avoid Kainé's magical orbs. Weiss tries to open the dialogue again, but Popola shut him up, stating that he is a traitor. This triggers Devola and Popola's next move: They use some sort of incantations to copy Grimoire Weiss' Sealed Verses.

They have access to the same abilities than Weiss, making them even more dangerous and unpredictable. Furthermore, our favorite floating book is having difficulties to recover.

But by working together, our heroes are able to stand up against the Twins. After a very tedious fight, the girls finally run out of stamina and decide to escape using magic bubbles. As a last warning, they explain that they are working for the Shadowlord...and the path he is taking will only result in failure.

Continuing further into the Castle, they find a beautifully decorated room, filled with dancing ghosts. While Kainé tries to open the next door, NieR is doing what he's best at; killing Shades. She kicks that door open. Behind it, hundreds of Shades were "stored". Those are a little bit special; our band already saw them from time to time, they are shaped like balls on don't do much damage.

Kainé gets trampled under the mountain of spherical Shades. They are now all quite talkative in whatever chatting childish Shades speak. Weiss thinks they might be crying... or maybe laughing, who knows.

One flying witch Shade seems to speak with the little one about the area. Too bad Weiss can't learn the Shade's language just like Façade's dialect. All the foes are gathering together, engulfed in a dark cloud... A giant Boar-Shade comes out of the turmoil!

This Shade, also known as Goose, is targeting our heroes using some charging attacks. Just like a normal Boar, they tend to rams into walls and briefly be stunned; this is when NieR focuses his offensive. After a while, the giant is collapsing on the floor. Just when they leave the room, the Boar comes back to life, twice as big and covered in makeshift armor. They rush through to door and run up a spiral staircase. NieR narrowly avoids getting drilled by Goose's tusks and retreats into another large, empty room. Kainé and Emil are busy trying to bust open the next door. Our hero is alone fighting the beast. When its health starts to plummet, it emits some sort of gas that slowly fills the room. The party soon begins to succumb to the deadly miasma. This isn't going well...

With the party physically weakened, Goose goes in for a final charge attack to finish them off. Suddenly, a half dozen spears land on its face and it crumples to the floor; the King of Façade, his Advisor, and the People of the Mask are here to help our heroes! A few of them rush over to start busting open the sealed door. Goose gets on its feet yet again, and everyone is doing its best to immobilize it.

The Men of the Mask manage to yank open the door, our group is forcefully shoved out of the chamber by them, before they seal the door behind again. They sacrificed themselves for the honor of the Mask, the King and their Queen... NieR is furiously pounding on the door to get back and help his friends. Kainé gets fed up with him wasting time when the King has clearly made up his mind. They continue onward deeper inside the Shadowlord's Castle.

Several corridors crossed, and they arrive in a derelict old-world conference room. Popola and Devola are waiting in this rather appropriate place for what's to come... The two girls explain briefly the Gestalt-Replicant systems to them, refreshing Grimoire Weiss' memory. The Twins are androids working for the Shadowlord, and Shades are the closest remnants of what was once a human being.



Popola Concept Art

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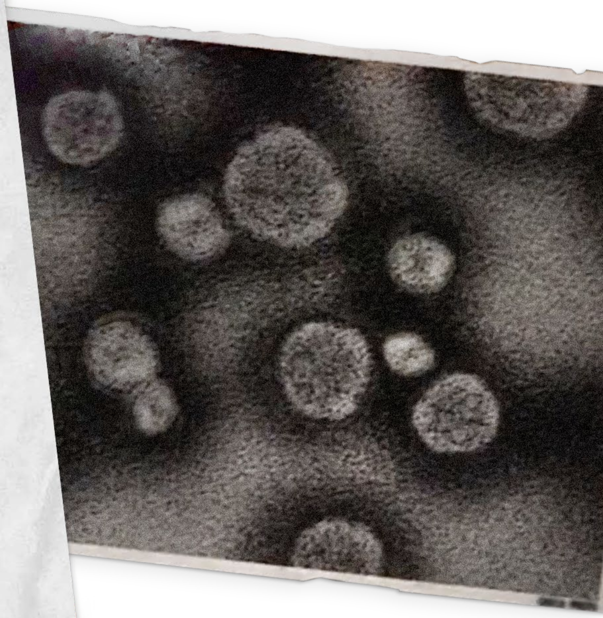
Project Gestalt

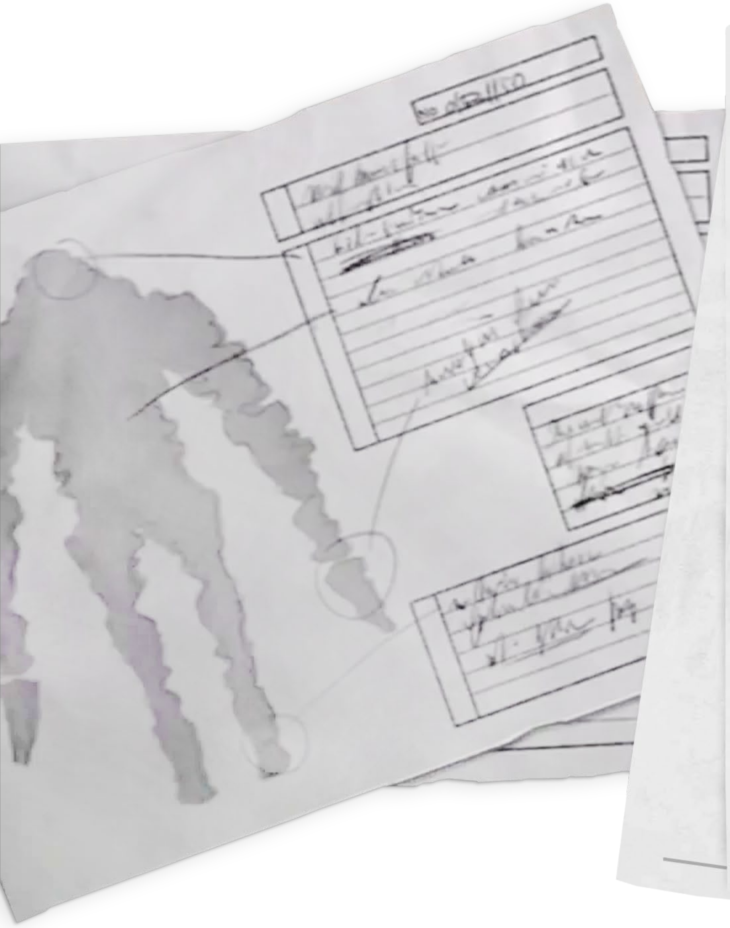
No. 5W 35 - D -- 12

Project Gestalt Report 0923

As noted in the previous report, implementation of Gestalt mode can prevent the White Chlorination Syndrome we recently experienced. Transfer of bodily information to civilization-repressed Replicants is proceeding as planned, with the genes of the Original safely stored inside.

Our role as surveillance androids to prepare for when the incurable bacterial disease eventually dies out is also underway. So far, this is proceeding without issue.





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Project Gestalt

No. 5W 35 - D -- 07

Project Gestalt Report 9182

This document discusses potential strategies for the relapse case we have observed in recent years.

The term "relapse", of course, refers to the catastrophic loss of sentience seen in certain Gestalts. This syndrome has defied even our most pessimistic initial estimates and continues to trend upward with disturbing speed.

With some relapsed Gestalts beginning to attack Replicants, there is an urgent need to take comprehensive action. We remain convinced that



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PROJECT GESTALT

No. 5W 35 - D -- 19

Project Gestalt Report 10432

Shorthand Minutes of Case 23 (Emergency Response Conference) Committee Special Meeting

Issue: Observed upward trend in relapses (noted and discussed).

Issue: Acceleration of restoration schedule (approved)

Report: Debate over using codename [redacted] for human restoration schedule.

Report: Preparations to launch "Weiss" decoding system for above.

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PROJECT GESTALT

No. 5W 36 - D -- S01

Project Gestalt Report 11242

We have determined that the rise of relapses was due to an unexpected spike in the sentience of Replicants, as well as a genetic instability within the original Gestalt. (It seems the Original's effect on bodies that have undergone the Gestalt process was not anticipated in advance.)

Immediate action must be undertaken to identify the links between this trend and the original Gestalt—along with its sister, the relapsed case known as Yonah.



But they have no time to waste exposing everything to mere Replicants. They step forward. Devola goes and attacks the group while Popola stays behind to provide back-up. Kainé tries to attack Popola first to prevent her sister to get healed. However, there is a defensive barrier on the boardroom stage and is invulnerable right now. Devola uses some abilities like Dark Hand or Dark Lances.

NieR fells terrible fighting the Twins, just hours ago, he could have gone to the tavern, hear Devola sing while drinking booze. Or maybe go ask Popola for a good read. Everything that happens so far in the Shadowlord's Castle is just... so surreal. Everything is messed up. The humans? Gone...
Good thing NieR fighting skills are almost muscle memory at this point.

Devola is defeated. Popola rushes over to her sister's side while she can pronounce her last words. This isn't a victory, it's a tragedy. Nobody moves, none of our group dare to attack Popola right now. The singer goes limp and passes away...

NieR tries to reason with Popola to stop any more bloodshed. She is having none of it. "Stop? You want me to stop? You think I have the luxury to stop? You cut down my sister like an animal and you tell me to STOP!? No one STOPS!! It's way too late to STOP! No one STOOOOOOPS!!"

A bold claim, coming from her. But again, NieR did kill her only sister and companion for the last millennium. Those two have watched the world wither for time immemorial. Popola unleashes a sphere of energy; something similar to Emil's uncontrolled accident at the Aerie. The explosion takes out the nearby bridge leading further into the Castle. Emil creates a ball to protect his friends from Popola's final attack, and to reach the next area.

Of course, she won't let them. Using some rather dark energy, she catches Emil's magical ball. The situation seems desperate. This is when Emil decides to sacrifice himself to save his friends. He separates himself from his friends' bubble and shoots one last magic glyph to push it off to safety as he is drawn into the mass of dark energy the android created.

The fusion of those two creates a frightening firework of energy. The white and black energy alternates faster and faster... until all collapses into itself. A tiny bit of Emil's shield floats down to the crater below...and disappears forever when it touches the grounds.

Sechs's side of the story (The King of Façade)

The Men of the Mask have been dying one after the other. Advisor Neun met the same fate too.

At the end of the fight, despite being fatally wounded, he succeeds in killing Goose by placing his lance perpendicular to the wall and letting her charge toward the deadly weapon. With the last of his strength, he drives his lance as far into Goose's face as it can go.

He falls to the ground, promising to see Fyra again after he dies.

Goose's side of the story

Goose is an aggregation born from the fusion of Gestalt babies (the spherical Shades) and their parents. Because it's not a fusion between relapsed Gestalts, its reasoning capabilities and will are still intact. It looks like a giant boar and burns with rage at NieR and his companions that have mercilessly slaughtered its many friends.

Goose is able to revive numerous times after being killed because of the huge number of Gestalts being used in its fusion. It is eventually slain by the King of Façade and his men, also killing them in the process.

The rest of the gang made it out all right...even if it did cost Emil's life. Understandably, the party has taken quite the morale hit due to his loss. NieR looks as though he is about to puke all over the floor. Kainé vents her frustrations out on NieR by kicking him to his feet, chocking him and decking him across the room.

She pins her companion against the opposite wall before realizing, they are a little bit too close to each other right now...She lets NieR go and starts walking onward.

They arrive into a run-down auditorium. In a corner of the room, NieR recognizes his own sister. Before he can run towards her, the Shadowlord appears before him. Time to finish what began five years ago.

The antagonist doesn't fight yet but is letting his Grimoire do the job for now. Despite the room massive size, NieR is able to pin it down in a random corner, hitting it with all his will and rage. The book summons dozens of pages around itself. Said pages explode when our hero is getting closer.

After repeating this back and forth a few times, Grimoire Noir is defeated. Time to fight its master.

He is extremely agile, and he can fly at incredible speed. The leader of the Shades also has access to the Twins' ability to teleport, and their Sealed Verses; he fires a half dozen lances in a line toward our hero. He can also block and parry NieR's attacks, something that no other Shade was able to do. The battle is tough. No one will stop until the other is dead.

Yonah suddenly gets up, begging them to stop. She walks up to the Shadowlord, she doesn't want the body he gave her. "There's another girl inside this body. I can...I can hear her. She keeps crying. She says she wants to see her brother. This girl loves her brother just as much as I do. It...It's not right she can't see him".

She asks if NieR is this "brother" the other girl is calling for. When she gets approval, she turns back to the Shadowlord:

"I...I'm sorry, brother. I don't... I don't know what to... I'm so very sorry... I love you, brother...I love you."

With her last words pronounced, the Gestalt Yonah dissolved in the sunlight, while Replicant Yonah collapses on the floor. Kainé goes support the grown-up girl's body while NieR finishes the fight.

The Shadowlord lets out a long, grief-filled scream before turning his attention back to him. During the battle, Weiss falls on the ground, revealing that all his power was used by NieR in the last five years. He then uses the last of his strength to completely destroy Grimoire Noir, losing his physical form in the process.

The Shadowlord resigns to his fate. After all, the only motivation he's had for trucking along the last thirteen-hundred years just evaporated a few minutes ago. NieR holds back the final blow for a moment and seems to briefly consider what he's doing...before he shakes it off and lands the killing blow.

And so, the Shadowlord is defeated. NieR rushes to Yonah's side... Yonah wakes up from her five years long sleep. The two of them embrace each other; NieR is happy. Kainé feels embarrassed with this touching family moment and decides it's time to split. Half the party is already dead anyway. It's probably best she hurries out of the region as soon as possible.

Since the day NieR helped her accomplish her revenge, the rules have been reversed. NieR's goal became hers. By saving Yonah, she saved herself. For the first time since long ago, in front of the reunited family, she feels hopeful; a hope for love and belonging. Tyrann, Kainé's Shade, isn't pleased at all by this emotional shift inside her heart. Overwhelm by Kainé's sudden and overflowing goodness, he relapses. Instantly, the effect can be seen on Kainé; her body begins to cover with the Black Scrawl markings

NieR looks her way, she is convulsing, clutching her arm. He tries to approach her but she yells for him to stay away. She falls to her knees while a black smoke starts enveloping her. As a final request, she asks NieR to kill her. The Black Scrawl completely takes her over, she transforms into a Shade.

However, Tyrann, who has been changed by this event, offers an alternative to Kainé's fate. If NieR trades his own existence, she will be able to become human again and live on. This will cost his life of course, but also the memories and any pieces of evidence of his existence. Yonah will forget about her brother. Kainé's will never know who saved her, nor that she has been saved in the first place. NieR chooses this option.

Kainé wakes up, welcome by the gentle breeze and the blinding afternoon sunshine. She looks at her hands, legs; she is alive. Next to her, Yonah is looking at her with a caring smile. The girl embraces her and thanks Kainé for saving her from the Shadowlord. Our hero cries, "It's like I just found something special, something very special" she says.

Emil's side of the story

Despite what you might think, Emil isn't dead. However, he is now a disembodied head. Emil expresses his relief as he lands somewhere in the desert and begins rolling along to locate the others.

You can read more about Emil's quest to find a new body in the short story Around the World in Eighty Days, on page 314.

Kainé's side of the story

After the events, Kainé keeps having terrible nightmares. She is unable to get rid of this feeling that something is missing since that day in the Shadowlord's Castle. These past days, she often goes outside to vent her frustration by slaying Shades.

Read more about Kainé's pursuit in the short stories "CD2/02: Lust" and "The Lost World" on pages 311 and 318 respectively.

Further insight on NieR Gestalt and NieR Replicant (Part II)

Written by The Dark Id

1 – How both versions of NieR changes after the five years long time skip.

This is a major event in both versions of the game, but it has a much larger impact on Brother NieR as a character in both a physical sense and in a personal (as in mental/personality) sense. He essentially has a nervous breakdown at having every possible thing in his life go wrong all at once. His cheery world view that everything will work out and be okay, his preconceived notions of the world and the people in it and his idealistic vision of the future are all shattered in the span of like a couple of weeks. He's left to grapple with a grim reality which he simply can't deal with. His failings take a harder toll on him physically and mentally in a more visible fashion as we can clearly see a change in his personality and appearance. He acts more violent, puts up with less bullshit, and is prone to angry outbursts. We clearly see how he's changed; he talks a lot more about how he's "going to kill every last Shade" and his life's goal is no longer just about protecting Yonah, it changes to killing Shades. It's the beginning of what Father NieR becomes; it's actually even more outspoken and violent because he's 21, his hormones are raging, and he's pissed.

Father NieR's own angle is more subtle and harder to place. He is a man who has endured decades of this terrible world and managed to deal with it, but he's ultimately been numbed to the struggle of those around him. It just piles up on his shoulders, but to keep himself from going absolutely insane, he has to simply accept his reality and deal with it. His failures and the ones of those around him pile increasingly, but instead of collapsing mentally, he deals with it. He reaffirms his belief that Shades are the enemy, that people need him, and that the world is only going to get worse if he ignores it. His mental foundation stands firm. His physical appearance on the outside barely changes and his true inner change is only reflected through the rare moments of dialogue with his friends.

They both work, but Brother NieR's change is the one that's presented clearly. A young, naive, optimistic young man's world is torn down and he becomes a brooding, violent psychopath obsessed with a single goal. Entire essays could be written about that, some of which could be titled "The idealism of childhood vs. the realism of everyday life", "Distortion of player expectations alongside NieR's" or maybe "Effects of childhood trauma on the personality of adults in later life".



Brother NieR, after the time skip

2 – The relationship between NieR and Emil.

The growing dynamic between Brother NieR and Emil is sort of like the kind of relationship a younger brother might have towards his older, "cooler" brother. They may not be actual brothers but NieR is essentially the only male role model Emil has who isn't a creepy butler robot (or whatever the hell Sebastian is) and so Emil sort of changes increasingly as a character based upon what he sees in him.
He's trying to emulate and be more like him.

If you think back on what was Emil like before the time skip, he was skittish, incredibly polite, and very formal about how he talks. NieR, on the other hand, is confident, can be crass, and is rather casual about his demeanor. After five years, he's gotten to know NieR to some degree and now he's a lot more willing to joke around, like for example how he passively makes fun of Weiss in his letter. After his fusion with Number 6, he even starts talking and acting more childlike and less like a creepy robot.

Basically, Emil looks up to and admires Brother NieR as a role model, he wants to be like him and so he ends up talking and acting more like him from now and into the future. This isn't essentially exclusive to Brother NieR though, it's just on a different context because Emil and NieR met at relatively similar "age" and stand on a similar footing as individuals as opposed to the age gap of Emil and Father NieR. But that's an entirely different subject of psychological mumbo-jumbo that I barely have a handle on so I'll stop.

3 – Gideon, Brother NieR, and Emil: similar premises, different outcomes.

There's something very interesting with how Gideon is portrayed in this game, it is something much more apparent in NieR Replicant. Something that a lot of people don't really notice about the young boy characters in the plot is that they're all framed in the near-identical circumstances. Brother NieR, Emil, and Gideon all suffer from similar situations and feel the same sort of pain, but the result of the events they're put through is drastically different based upon their own personalities and life status. Let's do a quick little run down of the trio. Brother NieR, Emil, and Gideon are all young boys in similar physical age brackets, have a sibling who is taken from them by outside forces which they have no control over, and are tested by an inner trial as a result of this which results in them forming deep personal changes as characters both physically and mentally.

It's a similar sequence of events for these three, but let's look at how they all take it.

Emil is the younger sibling to his sister Halua, who's used alongside him as an experiment for an ancient biological weapons program. He had no ability to get out of this situation and couldn't fight back against it. When finally coming face to face with her, now as No.6, he's forced to deal with the reality of his sister being transformed into a monster. Afterward, he's left to deal with becoming a monster himself. Luckily for Emil, he has had a positive upbringing with Sebastian at the manor. He has positive role models and friends in the form of Brother NieR, Kainé and Weiss who help him open up and become more of a friendly individual. His friends are there to support him through his time of need and as such finds the strength in them to accept who he has become, so even though he's Number 7 to the world, he's still Emil to them.
He's the Positive end of the sequence.

Brother NieR is the older sibling to his sister Yonah, who he's been tasked to protect by his parents after their deaths. After creating a bubble (NieR's House) within a bubble (NieR's Village) which he believes protects her from the horrors of the outside world, Jack of Hearts and The Shadowlord effortlessly breaks through and demonstrates the naivety he expresses with this. Brother NieR's upbringing has been shaky at best, his parents only present for a period of his life and left with the proxy parenting given by Popola and Devola. He's a young boy who only knows how to fight and kill, who has no one to really turn to, now that Yonah's gone and as such he slowly feels the creeping agony of truly being alone. He lives in a positive environment though; the Village loves him and supports him as best they can so his rage doesn't grow out of control. This turmoil and inner loathing grow over half a decade, resulting in a young man who truly hates what goes on around him but accepts it on terms that he can do something good in the world, that the show must go on. He hates all Shades and the Shadowlord because they didn't just take Yonah from him, they took his whole world. The childish innocence, his belief that the world will be okay and that everything will turn out fine, the safety of his little world, the people he truly cares about. Brother NieR is the neutral end, he's messed up but still a reliable, trustworthy person.

Gideon is the younger brother to Jakob, a duo of siblings who live with their mother in a Junk Heap of homicidal robots and evil Shades. His father disappearing and his mother abandoning then subsequently dying takes its toll on the young boy, who grows increasingly dependent on Jakob. Jakob isn't equipped to handle this kind of dependency, as such he struggles to even maintain a basic persistent living condition. He has trouble finding bread. When Jakob does eventually die due to his own childish clumsiness, Gideon is thrust into Emil and Brother NieR's circumstances and subsequently snaps. He shifts the blame of Jakob's death from himself onto the Shades / robots to keep a semblance of sanity and devotes himself to their destruction, his mental condition crumbling to the point where he hacks his own arm off! He has no positive role models or friends at Junk Heap to support him and his needs, relying solely on himself in a harsh, isolated environment where few can dare to tread. His only driving goal now is the same as Brother NieR's: revenge, but he is a misdirected one concocted by his own imagination. He's the Negative end of the sequence.

All three of the boys are in the same circumstance but are affected differently by external forces present in their aftermaths. They lose a sibling to something they can't control and are forced to deal with it both internally and from external sources such as friends and family. Emil is a positive result because even though he has the most radical/traumatic shift he ultimately becomes a happier, more sociable individual. NieR is a neutral result, he's left to grow in an emotionally distant and frustrating environment at the lack of genuine emotional connections and direction. Gideon is the negative result, he has no one to help him through his situation and is all alone to brood in his own little world.

Cavia's hatred for children is used in a way beyond simple cheap shot moments like Jakob's arm being torn off, it's used as a demonstration of how the influences of the world and the events around a person can shape their personality and ultimately determine the growth of boys into men.

YOKO FACT 14 - From GRIMOIRE NieR (translated by Defade)

Yoko had the concept of save file deletion early on in development but thought it'd be immediately rejected and shut up about it. Later when he told the committee of his idea, the reception was a lot more positive than expected.

Bosses and words were named after fairytales because of NieR's original plot. The basic premise is this: the world within picture books actually exist, and the heroes have to defeat the villains that came from the picture book. They were trying to revive their leader, so the heroes wanted to stop them. However, they have their own reasons. In the world of picture books, the same story is repeated over and over again, and the villains are doomed to be evil forever and to suffer their punishment for eternity. A certain scientist realized that and tried to free them, but was defeated by the heroes. So, the villains' goal is to revive him, but of course, the heroes won't allow that.

Yoko was surprised that the programmers even added a drift system to the boar, but he liked it so it was kept. Young NieR moves a bit slower than father NieR or older NieR because he has shorter legs.

Kaine's initial design was much more conservative, and NieR was originally designed with nobility in mind, but it just seems so out of place in his world, so they redesigned them.

Creators in the following interview:

Director – Yoko Taro

The director of this game, the one responsible for creating NieR's unique worldview. He's not too good with interviews, photo shoots, praise, or great expectations.

Scenario Writer – Sawako Natori

Famous for her work in "DOD" and "99's Tear" etc. Did some novelization work as well. Wrote Popola's madness scene while role-playing PreCure with her daughter.

Novelist – Jun Eishima

Novelized the "DOD" series. She also wrote "W – the two summers" under the penname Nagashima Emi. "Completely obsessed with shounen stuff" according to Yoko.

A study on ending D: Eishima and Natori's interpretations

Natori: Ending D felt very natural to me. NieR's love for his comrades was really strong, and even if that were Emil, he'd still save him. To him, only Yonah is special, and everyone else sorts of share the 1st place in his heart.

He probably thought that he'd be happy simply with people important to him, including Yonah, living on.

Eishima: To me, ending C was father NieR's choice, and ending D was brother NieR's choice.

A father is responsible for his own daughter, so he couldn't just give up his existence. He feels that it's his duty to protect Yonah and raise her, so he'd kill Kainé and live on. On the other hand, a brother and sister both coexist with and depend on each other, so maybe he'd choose to disappear and be relieved from his burden.

Natori: I see...

Eishima: Interpretations of ending C and D could really vary from person to person. That's why I think NieR is a game made for a wide audience. You do have a choice to make, but we don't try to force you into one by shouting "This is it, right!"

Yoko: However, it is a strange game.

The director, and staff feedback on NieR's sales

NieR was released without a hitch, and it seemed to have garnered quite the popularity.

Yoko: To tell you the truth, as someone involved in the development, I never expected such a positive response, and I was caught off guard.

The software and soundtrack were received with such praise that it's hard to find them anywhere.

Yoko: Well- I never thought that they'd garner such praise. I'm pretty uncomfortable with praise, so my butt is itching quite badly as a result.

Eishima: I thought that Yoko would definitely lock himself in his locker from the backlash of Ending D...(laughs)

※The Locker Incident: Happened after the release of "Drag-On Dragoon" on anonymous chat boards on the net. A huge amount of internet backlash arose from the strangeness of the last battle in ending E and depression-inducing contents of the multi bad ends. In response to that Yoko hid in a locker to ride out the storm of ASCII art flames directed his way. "Maybe Yoko will drag himself to the locker again" became an expression that captures the conflicting feelings of hate and love from the fans.

Yoko: I was completely prepared to go into the locker myself. (laughs) We put quite a lot of things in NieR, and as a result, it had its fair share of rough edges. As developers, we caught many of those rough edges ourselves, but if we wanted to fix all of them, the game will never get released. That's why we just took a "Whatever!" attitude regarding some issues. We did feel bad for the players though.

Despite all that, the general response is very positive. It seems like the satisfied players outnumber the ones who aren't.

Yoko: I wonder...actually, I'm not really confident, and I always look at reviews with a "This is so suspicious....!" attitude.

Eishima: Why are you always preparing yourself for the worst like that? (laughs)

Natori: It's like "If only 1 out of 10 people was satisfied..." except the ratio ended up being a bit more than 1:10. (laughs) Some good probably came out of reading tons of shounen manga and looking into their formula stories.

How is it like for the publisher?

Mr. T: (Square Enix) Even we didn't expect such popularity. Yoko's works are often quite enigmatic, and their target audience is mature. However, NieR's official site suddenly experienced an accessing boom before the official release date, and more and more inquiries were made as the release date closed in. We tried to satisfy the market as best as we could with a happy scream, but we couldn't quite keep up with the sales. It was pretty painful for us.

Yoko: It's a new game, so nobody is looking forward to it – maybe that's the secret behind NieR's success!

Eishima: Ah—That might actually be right (laughs)

Natori: Of course, there were the introductions in Dengeki PlayStation and Dengeki Games, but the weapon stories and short stories garnered the highest amount of feedback.

Yoko: That...is Eishima working too hard.

Eishima: What are you saying! It was your idea to have young NieR prostitute himself in the first place! I tried making it as tame as I could.

...it was supposed to be more shocking...?

Emil's "sexuality": "normality" in Yoko's works?

Kainé became a huge topic of discussion even before the release, but Emil's feelings towards NieR got its own share of attention after the release.

Yoko: I thought I made it quite clear with that bride statement, but it didn't seem to have gotten the message across.

One theory was that Emil developed feminine feelings and liked NieR as a result of fusing with his sister Halua—

Yoko: No, Emil is gay!

Eishima: Oh, confirmation is good. I thought that I saw nonexistent undertones because of my dirty mind. (laughs)

Mr. T: I thought Emil liked Kainé since they slept outside together, and wanted to marry her.

Yoko: Emil saw Halua in Kainé. To Emil, she was a reliable sister figure.

There always seem to be some characters with unusual sexual preferences in Yoko's works.

Natori: We just feel like that we're reflecting the real world while creating the worldview and settings.

Yoko: How would you define "unusual", is the question. If we look around, we can definitely see homosexuals, few in number they may be. I'm not trying to say "Don't discriminate" or anything like that, just "People like that exist. It's simply the way the world works". They're labeled with "normal", "unusual" and compared quite often, but the difference between people with certain sexual preferences lies purely in number. Some are quite abundant, some are not, but we're all in the same world. I never intended for them to appear as special.

Kainé's love scene, and why ending C and D feel strange

As I was playing, I understood that both Emil and Kainé liked NieR. However, very little emphasis was put on who NieR likes.

Yoko: I don't want to complicate the main point of the story. "An older brother saving his sister" was the main theme we wanted to portray, and I wanted to deliver all the drama involved as a first impression. Details of the worldview or personality quirks of other characters can be left later for people who really want to know. If I put in more about NieR and Kainé, the main theme would get muddled, so I refrained.

Kainé loves NieR, doesn't she?

Natori: That's right. When he was young, she just felt friendship towards a fellow comrade and a person she could trust, but she realized the changes in her feelings when she woke up in the library. We made to emphasize that during the scene.

Did Kainé ever reveal her feelings towards NieR during the journey?

Natori: NieR's heart was filled with thoughts of Yonah and revenge against the Shades. He really wasn't fit to deal with Kainé and Emil's faint feelings for him. (laughs) And Kainé wasn't good at confessing, so she resolved to be useful to him in his revenge at least. That's why she said, "I'll become his blade and die!"

Yoko: By the way, Kainé first realized that she loved NieR during the love scene in Shadowlord's castle.

???

Yoko: When she kicked NieR in his stomach.

Eishima: That...could it even be called a love scene? (laughs)

Yoko: It is a love scene! She realized that "Ah, I actually love this person!" when she was kicking him and beating him up! Her backing off was the girl side in her coming out.

It was a good scene. I could clearly see how Kainé's brain works. (laughs)

Yoko: It was the most romantic scene in the game.

Natori: When I was writing the scenario, I almost dipped into Kainé and NieR's romance territory a few times, but I remember Yoko telling me that "This isn't what I wanted to show" and asking me to change it. I have to focus on writing them as "comrades". So, it ended up as a rather simple love scene.

However, as a result of that, the development in ending C and D may come off as rather strange to players.

Yoko: Instead of being a decision for "NieR and Kainé", it was more like a choice for "the player and Kainé". If you like Kainé after playing through the game twice, then sacrifice yourself and save her, if you don't then you don't have to save her. I wasn't trying to force your hand into saving her by shoving romance down your throat.

I see. However, NieR's "My beloved~" line comes off as even more abrupt now.

Yoko: That was more like an impulsive thing rather than intended direction. (laughs) "Whether the player loves Kainé or not"—base your decision on that.

Ending D isn't the true end just because it comes last, but the player could freely choose "their own true end".

Yoko: That's pretty much it.

Eishima: However, as a gamer, you simply have to proceed to ending D since it was present in the system. After all, you do want to see it. (laughs)

Hearing you say that; I feel pain at having made my choice based on NieR being a game. Now I'm told to make that choice based on what I really feel for Kainé...in a certain manner of speaking, the hurdle the player had to cross was quite high.

The legend passed on: this game also has multi-bad ends?

In ending A, B and C, Replicant NieR successfully saved Replicant Yonah, and still...?

Yoko: Replicant Yonah and NieR remained, but since Gestalt NieR was killed by Replicant NieR, he couldn't provide the stabilizing demonic element anymore, and all Gestalts will relapse eventually. If that happens, their respective Replicants cannot regenerate their bodies anymore. Also, the managers of the Replicant's death and rebirth system, Devola and Popola were killed by Replicant NieR, so the replicants in that area will come to an end in this generation.

In the end, Yonah won't be saved?

Yoko: Replicant Yonah's Black Scrawl remained uncured, so the disease will proceed and kill her.

What happens after Replicant NieR loses his existence in ending D?

Yoko: Firstly, since the Black Scrawl isn't cured, Yonah will still die.

W-what about Kainé who survived?

Yoko: She won't die immediately, but since the Replicant System itself has become dysfunctional, she'll eventually die.

Hearing all that, I can't help but think that everything Replicant NieR's done has been in vain...

Yoko: What you said. (laughs)

Eishima: Well, whichever ending you reach, it's always "Yonah dies" "everyone dies". (laughs)

Natori: Yes, that's Yoko's world. (laughs)

Eishima: That's why we had a multi-bad end system this time as well~♪

Mr. T: What, why is everyone so happy.

Eishima: Whatever Yoko and his team come up will never conclude nicely. Actually, when I heard of these endings, I thought that he finally managed to conclude something in a relatively nice manner.

Natori: No matter how much of a happy end it is, or how much of a brilliant hero the main character is, it's just a part of the bigger picture, and even us who are talking here today will eventually die. It's all very normal.

The word normal is pretty heavy.

Exclusive to this book, ending E: its mystery, hope, and despair

Even amongst the various short stories in this book, "The Lost World" that depicted "what happened after ending D" has to be the most surprising. I'll simply call it "ending E".

Eishima: To those who left ending D with a hole in their heart, the contents should be quite pleasing.

What kind of situation does this ending E take place in?

Yoko: After the Shadowlord disappeared, a program to reset the entire replicant system begins its execution in the Forest of Myth, and Kainé goes to destroy it.

Why did he return as a young boy?

Yoko: He was reconstructed with the "memories" that the tree had of his first visit to the Forest of Myth. Also, as the writer, I simply wanted them to "repeat the fun times they had, traveling together".

Personally, I thought that if he returned in his older form, he'd have a chance with Kainé.

Yoko: In "Gestalt", he returns in the state before he got his eye patch! So he might have a chance?!

Eishima: Well, there's nothing really bad about a couple with such a huge age difference, but still.

If Emil could petrify Kainé for another 5 years...

Natori: He's got four arms now, so that must be as easy as breathing for him. (laughs)

Eishima: But...you see, if 5 years pass, then the Replicants with Gestalts will start dying one after another due to the black scrawl ~ (looks far away)

Yoko: Even if the destruction system is gone, everyone is going to die, be it late or soon ~ (looks far away)

Natori: Right~(smiles)

How cruel.

Natori's scenario is so realistic that it becomes scary?!

Yoko: You said that it's cruel, but I really cut down on the kind of cruelty that's really harsh mentally. I turned down quite a few scenes in Natori's scenario.

For example?

Yoko: Personally, I can't stand the depiction of Emil and Kainé outside the village, like the SS "The Narrow Gate". I just feel really bad when I read about it.

Emil simply laughing along just adds to it.

Yoko: Yeah. But that's what Natori is best at. She also wrote some realistic scenarios involving NieR and Yonah as siblings, but that was simply too real, and I couldn't bear it. My heart just hurt too much.

What kind of scenario was that?

Natori: For the beginning of the game, I remember writing about NieR thinking that Yonah was a heavy burden, and couldn't stop himself from exclaiming "If only you weren't here!" and hurting Yonah with his feelings. After all, he is a young boy, so it's natural that he couldn't control his emotions and end up hurting his family.

Yoko: To me, that was too realistic and hard to bear, so I refused it.

Eishima: If that scene made its way to the completed product, maybe NieR wouldn't have come off as such a pitiful child? Nobody is going to scold Yonah, who gets all the love, so the players might get irritated at his actions. (laughs)

Difference between NieR and mainstream shounen manga: the lack of reality

Eishima, what did you think of NieR's scenario when you read it?

Eishima: To be honest, I thought it was pretty normal for something coming from Yoko. I heard he was aiming for something like mainstream shounen manga, so felt that this was pretty much it. However, as I read along, I just felt really weird, and somewhat disgusted. I understand it better now that I heard Natori's "no approval for real scenarios" incident. The thing is, every character reacts differently from what you'd usually expect. Everyone just sort of accepts it and goes along with it. That's why when I look at the story from a whole, I just get this weird sense of wrongness.

Yoko: Aren't shounen manga like that as well?
The cream of the crop all feels really wrong.

Eishima: Not really, shounen manga still falls into some sort of harmony. In a certain sense of speaking, "NieR" completely neglected all that and feels rather odd.

Natori: In that case, the no-goes Yoko gave were spot on. If you were trying to make it into an odd game, you'd have to delete things that are too real. I can think of it that way now.

Yoko: Nah, I'm pretty weak against those scenarios, so I just couldn't bear looking at them. I never thought it ends up like this. (laughs)

Since replicants had artificial personalities, I instinctually thought that their expressions might not be quite human-like.

Eishima: That's one way of looking at it. You could also say that the most human-like being was Popola, who was actually an android.

In summary of what you all just said, ultimately, the world of "NieR" did not have "the reality of the human world". What remains is only a dreamlike and surreal sense of reality. In that manner of speaking, it might've become the kind of story that people who seek for RPGs have been looking for.

If we're talking about the lack of realism, then the intersexual heroine must be the epitome of that. Was Kainé intersexual as a human?

Yoko: No, in our setting, she was born as an intersexual due to an error in the long-running replicant system. Originally, she was a female with a fiancée and was supposed to get married.

Wasn't the Shade Tyran her original gestalt?

Yoko: Kainé has her own, separate gestalt. Tyran was still a normal Shade who hasn't begun to relapse yet, but he just happens to like slaughter in the first place and attempted to take over replicant Kainé's body. He gets enjoyment out of Kainé's anguish and worries.

NieR and Tyran combined their efforts to save Kainé, who went berserk in ending C and D, but how exactly is Kainé saved in ending D?

Yoko: ... by everyone's love and spirit!

From non-humans to intersex: "NieR" is a harem game!?

Well then, let's hear everyone's favorite character.

Yoko: No.7 for me. I really liked him ever since D.K. proposed his design, and as a result, he didn't go through many retakes.

Natori: My favorite's Kainé. If the characters in "NieR" were in my class at school, I want to call out to Kainé, who'd probably be sitting all by herself.

Eishima: It's definitely young NieR for me!

Yoko: Eishima is simply crazy about young NieR's zettai ryouiki.

Eishima: I want to play as young NieR forever...but, I think that in "NieR", everyone but NieR himself is the hero. Weiss even confessed to him at the end.

Yoko: Huh!? Where?

Eishima: That parting scene where he was like "I rather like the name Weiss".

Yoko: If you say that was a confession, then Eishima, I applaud your brain. (laughs)

Eishima: What!

Both Weiss and No.7 are rather popular amongst the females as mascots.

Yoko: Emil was always shut inside the mansion, so he's pretty naïve. He stopped growing and remained young ever since becoming a weapon, but his stupidity is rather endearing.

Eishima: I really laughed at the post-credit sequence in ending B. I really had fun writing about No.7's solitary travels in the SS. (laughs) That's why I thought that I couldn't finish the DLC...the not-quite-magic-bullets-but-Emil-bullets...I can't cut them!

Yoko: That was pretty easy to make, and when it was actually implemented, it made a rather funny picture, so I liked it. It's rather creepy, but all the female staff just went "So cute, so cute". He's quite the character.

Now that you think about it, NieR is quite popular, being surrounded by all these fascinating characters.

Yoko: It's a harem.

Eishima: Nobody is fully female though.

Yoko: He's rather popular amongst non-humans. Still, he remains oblivious, and all he thinks about is Yonah. Such a horrible man. (laughs)

Born from Natori's scenario: a Yonah who "hurts others mercilessly"

Yoko: I actually really like the scenes with Yonah, and the one that really caught my favor was when Kainé left in ending A. In my request to Natori, I only wrote: "please make it a beautiful ending where they look upon the sky". And then she gave me that scene where Yonah says "Brother, look!" at the worst possible moment. I was like "What's up with this amazingly twisted scene, wow!!" (laughs)

Natori: That was a calculated crime. Although they're siblings, their positions are also similar to that of a protector and his daughter, so I thought that Yonah would do something like that.

Eishima: That really caught me off guard. Saying something like that at that moment seems probable for a father and daughter since the daughter has the right to have her father all by herself. But it's just too dark for siblings...!

Yoko: She's still mentally five. But that's still not something to be excused. (laughs) Someone needs to scold her.

Love towards Kainé and Emil: "I'm glad that I had companions"

Natori, please tell me your favorite scenes or lines if you have any.

Natori: I loved that scene where Kainé fell asleep in Emil's mansion and the exchange with Weiss following that. When I write those scenes where they seem like a family, I feel happy for Kainé. Also, I'm a bit wary of blowing my own trumpet, but I liked Kainé saying "This isn't a sin" to Emil. When I thought of how much Emil needed someone who thinks like that and poured in all my love, that line just came out naturally.

It really makes her seem like a big sister.

Natori: I feel like I put more thought into Kainé and Emil. They possess more of a burden than NieR and Weiss, physical-wise, which led to their isolation, so I put a lot of conversations that emphasize how great it is to have companions.

Which scene does Eishima like?

Yoko: Eishima is definitely satisfied with just watching young NieR's back while he roams the fields, since it's zettai ryouiki and whatnot.

Eishima: I did get satisfaction from making him run like crazy. (laughs) But you see...when I get really happy watching that, my high school son would just pass by and say "But, haven't this kid's tunnels been opened up already?", popping my bubble.

Yoko and Natori: (laughs like crazy)

That is Eishima's sin.

Eishima: No! Yoko was the one who made young NieR do that, and I just novelized it!

Yoko: My my, Eishima's a sinful person. Fueling every fan in the nation.

Eishima: This game is just too controversial, seriously! (laughs)

"Replicant" was almost canceled!?

Yoko: We somehow made it possible to release both "Replicant" and "Gestalt" at the same time, but there was a time when "Replicant" almost got called off.

Mr. T: Something like that did happen.

Yoko: It took approximately 3 years for development, but during that time we were called to a meeting with America's Square Enix to give a brief report on the game and its progress. Back then, we planned to release the two games earlier, so we were on a tight schedule. When we realized that during the meeting, those higher-ups just reasoned "Can't we just go with "Gestalt"? We could live with not releasing a special version in Japan, can't we?" in English. (laughs)

And what happened after that?

Yoko: The producer Satou, who was sitting by my side, just sort of looked at me with a "...what do we do now?" face, and I just stuck to my opinion that I really didn't want this. (laughs) If we can't make "Replicant", our development team's motivation will go down like crazy, and as a result, even "Gestalt" will be released later!? Are you okay with that!? Is what I threatened them with.

Mr. T: That was pretty selfish.

Yoko: We planned to make a sibling story in the first place.
Although back then "Replicant" was to be voiced in English, there was some trouble with the voice actors.

Eishima: Now that's news to me! If "Replicant" had English voices with subtitles, it might not have become such a topic of discussion.

Yoko: Then producer Satou said "Let's just do it with Japanese voices" at the last moment on a whim...maybe it was a wise decision. (laughs) So he adjusted the voice actors.

I heard that you were pretty insistent on Kainé's voice.

Yoko: Our original concept was for her to have a cute and lovely voice in the beginning, to go with her feminine design. But I wanted to reflect her rough side even in her voice, so that's why we asked Atsuko Tanaka to do the role.

Natori: I had the most fun writing Kainé's vulgar lines. I remember writing **** to censor the words, but putting the dirtiest words and most horrible profanities in parentheses after them. "She's saying something like thiiiis!♪" I had a lot of fun, so it was great to be able to write them out even though they were censored by beeps.

Yoko: Having Tanaka say "all of that" and hearing "all of that" in the studio was a nice experience as well.

If they just heard that, Tanaka fans throughout the world are going to faint in agony.

Save data: what if there was no ending D...

Hearing all that, the successful release of "NieR" definitely seems to be the product of the hard work of many parties.

Yoko: Yeah, I feel that it's very fortunate in that regard. Back then we didn't plan a limited edition first press version, and it was thanks to Mr. T and his crew that it was made possible.

Mr. T: That's because the music was simply too good.
I insisted that we should do it, and it did eventually get realized.

I'm surprised that the soundtrack released earlier than the game.

Yoko: I made quite a lot of selfish requests to Okabe Keiichi from MONOCA and Emi Evans. In the end, they made great songs that far exceeded my expectations, so I'm really grateful. I'm really happy that the soundtrack has been receiving such positive reviews.

Ending D must come as a huge surprise for players.
It's amazing how such a system could come to pass.

Yoko: I really wanted to do that, so producer Satou did his best to realize it.
At first, we didn't even allow players to make backup data.

Eishima: If that got passed, Yoko's definitely heading to his locker. (laughs)

Yoko: Yeah, even I know when to restrain myself. (laughs) So we allowed backups to be made, and added several confirmation messages after the choice that would lead to data deletion. Only after all that did my idea gets passed, so all's well.

If that system was turned down, how would the players reach the final ending?

Yoko: After playing the game once thoroughly, you won't be able to use your first save file name. After seeing endings A, B and C using your second name, you would be able to play the portion described in the SS "The Lost World". And after inputting the name you used the first time, you'll be able to take back the protagonist.

Eishima: That seems really fun by its own rights. I'd actually like to play.

Natori: That, by its own rights, seems like some twisted mechanic that's going to open the locker's door. (laughs)

Is there any special meaning to the fact that you can't use the name of your first playthrough?

Yoko: Back when we planned on the 7-playthrough system, we wanted to emphasize the fact that he definitely "existed", and that players "remember him clearly" by forbidding you from using the name you used at first. Not being able to use the same name after ending D is simply what remained of the "7 playthrough system just in case".

A sequel? A series? Looking towards the future

"NieR" became a huge topic of discussion everywhere, but what are your thoughts concerning your next piece, Yoko?

Yoko: I just finished with "NieR", so I didn't really think of anything. After all, I am but a developer (from Cavia). I only make things according to plans that were approved by the publisher and okayed for the budget. I'll be glad if another opportunity like this comes up.

What about a NieR's sequel?

Yoko: Nothing as of now. However, I am quite interested in expanding the worldview as I did in this book, linking the game with other media. Things that can't be properly expressed in the game can have their chance to shine on text. We tried out lots of different methods within our limited budget and time, and I really wanted to deliver to fans in the best way possible.

Is there anything that Eishima or Natori would want to write about if conditions were favorable?

Eishima: The word limit on SS really gave me a hard time, so I'd like to write something lengthy. NieR's worldview has unusual depth, so I wanted to hear more about its settings from Yoko, and dig up more juicy information.

Natori: I wanted to write something about the leader wolf and the old man. There are simply too many lovable characters, so I'd be glad to keep in touch with them in some form or the other.

Finally, please give a message to the readers of this book, Yoko.

Yoko: I am happy that you liked "NieR". Please don't expect too much from now on, but go about it with the mentality of trying a bit of something and finding it unexpectedly good.



The Narrow Gate

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It takes during the game and tells the story of Kainé and Emil sleeping outside as usual.

This English version was brought to you by Defade.

Distinctions that should be kept. Borders that should be maintained.
The melancholy and sighs of those treated as outsiders.

Laughter from people of all ages can be heard beyond the tall stone wall.

“It seems like fun.”

Looking up the wall, Emil said while moving his nicely arranged teeth. He kept saying the same thing since a while ago. It’s the fifth time already. Kainé thought although she kept silent. Tonight, a festival is being held by Popola in NieR’s village. It was either in celebration of the library’s collection exceeding ten thousand volumes, or the 150th anniversary since the village’s opening, but nobody knew for sure. The main point was to find some excuse to make a ruckus throughout the whole night.

“I wonder, is NieR having fun now?”

Emil’s voice was laced with conflicting feelings of hope for NieR’s enjoyment and regret that he himself can’t join in. Kainé didn’t answer him. If she spoke, then she’d definitely speak in the same tone as Emil did. Kainé kept her silence, and watched the closed gates of the village, fully intent on not even letting a bug through. A gate that she and Emil could never hope to pass.

Yesterday night, Kainé and Emil were sleeping outside as usual when the gates were suddenly opened. The person that passed through to their side was the village librarian Popola. “I want to release the villagers from their daily lives lived in fear of Shades for just one night.” Her knowing eyes shining beneath her thick bangs, Popola spoke of the plan for tomorrow night’s festival. It was obvious that she was thinking of NieR when she talked about the “villagers”. That’s why she came to us, Kainé thought. She knew that Kainé and Emil would help her for NieR, so she came.

“During the festival, the people won’t be as cautious of Shades as they usually would be...
I know that I’m pushing my luck in putting forth such a request when you’re forbidden
from entering the village...”

“Leave the night watch to us. I’ll keep all Shades outside.”

Kainé interrupted before Popola could finish her long-winded request. “Keep watch outside the door" is simply another way of saying “Don’t come in the village even during the festival.”

What a bitch. Popola swiftly ignored Kainé’s glare. “I’ll be counting on you then,” she bowed her head and left. NieR came to them at the break of dawn, and said “There’s some sort of festival tonight” with a gloomy face.

“I don’t really feel up for it.”

“Once the festival begins, you’ll feel better.”

Kainé didn’t miss a beat with her reply, but NieR simply kept his silence as if he lost all enthusiasm.
Emil deliberately said in a bright voice,

“A festival! Isn’t that nice? You need a breather once in a while.”

“But...”

"Brat, what Emil said was right. Don't you understand that Popola was trying to get you to relax for your own good?! You look like you could snap at any moment!"

After being berated by Grimoire Weiss, NieR finally nodded.

"Then Kainé and Emil should rest easy for tonight. Let's go to the festival together.
I'll ask Popola if you guys can join in."

NieR was completely innocent in his proposal. However, seeing his pale face being lit up by a healthy smile, Kainé dug her nails into her hands almost hard enough to draw blood.

"Not interested."

As if making up for Kainé's rudeness, Emil moved up front.

"Um, um, I'm not really good with night festivals since I get sleepy immediately.
NieR, Weiss, just enjoy yourselves, okay?"

Although the expression on his skull did not change, the waver in Emil's feelings could be heard from his rushed and slightly high-pitched tone. However, NieR did not notice. His response was disappointingly meek. He simply nodded and said, "I see."

"It seems like fun."

Emil whispered the same words again in between yawns.

"That's the sixth time."

"Eh?"

"Nothing. Go to sleep. I'll take the watch."

"But..."

"Sleep. NieR must be asleep already."

Emil easily believed Kainé's words, though she had nothing to back them up with. "Good night," Emil said and slipped beneath the thick covers that provided cover from wind and rain. Almost immediately, his breathing began to slow down. His breaths were the same as that of normal children.

Gazing at the blanket that undulated with Emil's breaths for a few moments, Kainé began to do some stretches. She lifted up her two swords, and after making sure that the blade wasn't dull, placed them down again. To Kainé, these two huge lumps of metal are better expressions of herself than words. She placed her hands on the handle and gripped it gently.

It's well into the night, but the ruckus beyond the stone wall shows no signs of receding. Not only that, it only seemed to increase in volume. A cheery tune accompanied by a rich voice resounded through the air. The voice probably belonged to Devola, who let her voice run free. Whistling and claps overlapped, and laughter was everywhere. The festival's in full swing. Can festivals really brighten and provide a release for people's hearts to that extent? To Kainé who never had the luxury of experience, it was a bright and unknown world.

Along with the people's cheers, a savory aroma floated outside the village. It's meat. Kainé's stomach rumbled. Almost in response to her stomach's plea, the door opened. Kainé stood on guard for an instant, but relaxed when she recognized the thin silhouette that sprung from the ground.

NieR stood while holding a giant bowl of meat mixed with a load of vegetables and fruits.

"Thanks for your hard work. Aren't you hungry? They're cold now, but I brought you some meat.
They look delicious, don't they?"

NieR looked at Emil's sleeping form, and regretfully said: "I guess I'm a bit late." Looking at the delicious meat, Kainé tightened her lips. The festival must've brought much reprieve and enjoyment to NieR, enough that he could've lost track of time easily. However, even during all the festivities, NieR did not forget about them. He tried to share his happiness with them.

“Thank you” – though the words are simple, Kainé could not bring herself to say them. She opened and closed her mouth many times, but eventually decided on snatching the bowl from NieR. The meat was cooked well enough that its skin looked crisp, and Kainé immediately began stuffing herself with it. The meat beneath the skin was surprisingly soft, and with every bite came a mouthful of meat sauce and blood.

Kainé chewed thoroughly as if putting the words, she had to say – the words she wanted to say -, into this simple mechanical action. Seeing Kainé’s antics, NieR smiled.

“I was right. You were hungry.”

No. That’s not it. Kainé’s muffled words were drowned out by a village girl’s voice, she peeked at them from the village gates.

“So this is where you were, NieR. Come, come! Devola is going to laugh!”

“Eh? What’s wrong with Devola?”

Straightening himself from his crouch, NieR ran with a jumpstart. He’s going back to the festival with the village girl. “Well then, I’ll see you tomorrow. Good night.” NieR waved. Kainé merely watched him go in silence. The gate was closed again. The bowl’s delicacies seem to have lost their color.

“A victim of discrimination. I feel for you.”

Suddenly, a voice cracked inside her head like a flash. Kainé put her hands around her head and staggered. The next moment, she felt the presence of a Shade in the grass and reached for her sword.

“Woah, you kill us Shades on sight?”

“Us”? Kainé widened her eyes. The voice resounding in her head was that of a Shade’s? Shades can speak? Impossible! Kainé was ready to laugh it off. However, the left side of her body was not as forgiving. It was blazing hot, and her left arm engorged to several times its normal size, chunks of black matter moving of their own will.

“Shades resound with each other.”

Just like the voice in her head had said, both her body and heart were being invaded by a Shade. She probably didn’t have many days left until she becomes a complete Shade. With a snap, darkness filled her vision. She should’ve been able to see, but she couldn’t. Her body is rejecting colors. So, this is despair. Kainé bit her lips and tried to support her staggering body with her two swords. The Shade spoke.

“A complete Shade… hey, aren’t you misunderstanding something? In the first place, you are…”

“Shut up! Don’t look in my heart! Die, you fucking bastard!”

Using all her strength, she struck her swords into the grass. Her killing intent towards the Shade was the only thing that empowered her.

Shades are her grandmother’s killers. Killers. Killers. Killers… Kainé’s eyes were stained red, and her hair stood up on their ends. Filled with bloodlust, she licked her lips. The Shade looked like a black mirage, and when it jumped out from the grass, Kainé took after him and swung her swords. She put enough strength into her swing to dislocate joints. The Shade’s words continued to come from that direction.

“Stop it. Hey, please stop it.”

“Are you happy? If you kill Shades, your grandma will be overjoyed.
NieR will be happy. That’s good, isn’t it.”

“Then what? Even if you kill us Shades, the discrimination you suffer won’t lessen.
You still won’t be able to join in festivals. That’s how the world is. I know. I understand. Because I am”

The Shade’s words were cut off. Kainé’s sword severed the Shade in two from its head. Though they look like shadows, cutting the Shades feels raw. Like cutting through meat and severing bones. Usually, she’d push her sword all the way from the Shade’s head to its feet, but tonight, her sword stopped midway. The last screams of the Shade echoed in her head. Showered in the Shade’s expelled bodily fluids, Kainé contorted her face.

“You… are… wavering, aren’t you?”

Even within the last lights of its life, the Shade still tried to talk.

"You are.... beginning to.... understand, aren't you? Us Shades are the true— "
The Shade's voice was thin, covered by its shallow breaths.
However, Kainé still heard it. Something she didn't want to. The truth was hammered onto her.

"That's a lie."

Even as she groaned, Kainé knew that the Shade's words were not lies. She understood in some deep part of her heart. The Shade stood up before Kainé who fell on her knees. Lugging along its corpse-like body, it tried to escape, tried to survive.

At that moment, Kainé heard an explosion. Following the source of the sounds, Kainé looked up at the sky. Fireworks were exploding in the sky. It looks like this was part of the program that Popola arranged. The fireworks left behind bright trails, and the color returned to Kainé's heart. Behind her closed eyes, the image of her grandma's horrible corpse after being devoured by Shades revived. In her peripheral vision, she saw Emil's sleeping form. And within her heart, she felt NieR's desire.

Death to all Shades!

"You fucking shithead! I won't forgive you. I'll never fucking forgive you!"

Kainé groaned and stood up. Strength and warmth returned to her body.

"I... see. That's too bad. I thought... you of all people... turned into something you don't desire... would understand the pain of discrimination."

"Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!!"

Kainé screamed. She bent her knees and jumped towards the fleeing Shade. She held her swords over her hea and swung down. Even when the Shade ceased its movements, she still cut away at its corpse. She felt that the voice in her head would return if she stopped for even a moment. Screaming, she continued to swing her swords blindly. How long has it been? She felt a warm breath on her ear.

"Stop it. Please stop, Kainé. It's okay. It's already dead."

When she came to herself, Emil was holding her back.

"I see. It's dead."

Wiping the body fluids and thin slices of meat off her blade onto the grass, Kainé finally sheathed her swords. She probably held it in a firm grip for too long – her calloused hands were full of blood.

"What's wrong? What happened when I was asleep?"

Emil asked while bandaging Kainé's palms. Kainé shook her head and said "nothing." At that moment, fireworks were shot from the village once again. Both Kainé and Emil looked towards the sky.

"It's so pretty."

The light reflected off Emil's head made him colorful, and he smiled. And then he whispered.

"Fireworks are great. Even if we're outside the village, we could still enjoy them."

Kainé kept her silence and stared at the solid gates. Inside and outside the village. She realized that those borders mean so little to her now. Whether she realized it or not, she crossed a huge border tonight. The voices of the villagers faded into the distance. NieR was far off. Even Emil felt much farther from her. Ignorance is bliss. Kainé tightened her lips. That's why she'll never tell this truth to anyone. No matter what. Kainé closed her heart's door that accepted the secret, bolted the lock, and turned towards Emil. She asked.

"Is it not dawn yet?"



The Little Mermaid

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR.

This English version was brought to you by Defade.

A brilliantly colored light that burns a fruitless flower. Did its despaired screams reach God?

1

Morning dew enshrouded the coast.

A postman walked at a sedate pace. His breaths were colored white. Every now and then he'd stop and readjust the strap of his huge backpack with an "oomph".

"My my. This is just going to worsen my leg injury… hmm?"

A huge shadow loomed over him. He thought that it was a mountain at first, but when he squinted his eyes, he realized that something huge was draped across the coastline. The moment he saw the black shadow, his body sprung to alert in fear of Shades. The postman's reaction was understandable. Recently, people kept disappearing from the city, and rumors say that it was caused by a Shade. The postman squinted his eyes. The black shadow did not move. And there aren't any Shades this big in the first place. When he closed in, he saw a huge ship. The mast was broken, and the boat itself fared no better. Perhaps it was destroyed by a storm. The presence of a few cannons confirmed its identity as a military ship.

"I can't believe that such a huge boat could crash into the reefs…"

The black and huge shadow made sinister creaking sounds. It's not a Shade, but this is pretty scary in itself. At that moment, he felt like he saw something moving inside the ship. The postman froze. Finally, a Shade, huh?

Following the instructions taught to him by his friend, the postman slowly backed away. Don't run. Don't show your back. Don't avert your eyes…the effectiveness of the methods was questionable, but that's how he was taught to deal with a Shade. His right foot still hurt, so it's impossible for him to run anyway. When he backed away 3 steps, he heard a strange sound. Almost like…a cough. The postman stopped. He heard the sound again, and this time it was clearly a cough. A child's cough. It only took him 15 seconds to make up his mind. 60 seconds to start walking. His heart was set within that amount of time. There's no way he could leave a child alone.

The ship must've witnessed quite a ferocious storm, as evidenced by its torn insides. A huge hole opened on the left side, and was filled with sand. I can get in like this. He stepped in cautiously. It was dark inside the ship. However, sunlight filtered through the cracks here and there, and brightened the room enough for him to navigate. Seawater was still dripping through the ceiling, so he walked carefully across the wet floor. The passageways were filled with the stench of the sea.

He heard another cough.

He made his way towards its source. He walked through the corridor, opened the door, and looked left and right in search of the voice's owner in the messy rooms. He was in a room deep within the bowels of the ship. He heard a cough from within. The postman peeked inside.

A cough.

What he saw were fragile limbs that seemed like they could break at any moment. Pitiful rags. Two black eyes that peered fearfully at the postman. A young girl was there.

2

"Hmph, we couldn't get any proper information."

Weiss complained from his place on the table. NieR continued eating his fish, showing no signs of whether he heard Weiss or not. Weiss is the kind of being that talks whenever he likes, paying no heed to whether his input is needed or not. Since he has nothing else to do during lunchtime, he talks even more than usual. NieR was used to it, and got into the habit of sidestepping Weiss's inquiries every now and then while eating.

"Are you listening to me?"

"Ah."

"How long are you planning to stay here?"

"I wonder."

"How are you going to find the Shade?"

"I'll start thinking."

It's been three days since they heard of the continuous disappearances of Seafront's townsfolk. They investigated the incident on the bounds of Shade invasion, but couldn't find any useful hints. At the end of the day, all they had was some nonsense like "they were attacked by a mermaid." If that's all there is, they were going to abandon this incident altogether. But the fact is, people were disappearing, and they couldn't leave this incident alone.

Giving short replies to Weiss's complaints now and then, NieR ordered two more bowls of noodles from the bar master.

"You're still going to eat?"

It's for Kainé and Emil outside, he said, and Weiss shut up.

Maybe it's due to the proximity of the sea, but the food provided in the bar was very good. After going through the hardships of Yonah's cooking, NieR didn't care for the particularities of food as long as they were edible, but he always looked forward to eating in this town. Whenever he ate anything delicious, he'd think of Yonah. I want to let Yonah eat this. I want to make her smile. NieR's expression darkened. Weiss started throwing complaints at him again. He continued talking to NieR out of some self-imposed sense of duty.

3

The furthest door in the corridor of the boat.

"You there?"

The postman opened the door, disturbing the flow of the salty and wet air. There was one nearly broken table in the room. A girl slowly crawled out beneath the table. The postman pulled out a piece of bread from his bag, but stopped himself at the last moment. If he gives the bread over, he wouldn't be able to eat anything today. However, if he didn't, then the girl would be the one to suffer hunger. It's not even worth considering. He placed the bread on the table and motioned for the girl to eat it. He doesn't know the reason behind the girl's inability to talk. The girl merely tilted her head whenever he attempted conversation, and it was only two days after their meeting that he was able to communicate through hand signs and body language.

The girl looked between the bread and the postman for a moment, but immediately began wolfing down the bread. After finishing her bread in a short time, she looked at the postman again.

"Sorry, but the city isn't faring too well in the food department either,
so I couldn't bring as much as I wanted."

The postman smiled sheepishly while scratching his head. The girl merely stared at him, and didn't even nod. No matter how much he taught her, the girl couldn't speak. How on earth did she manage to survive all this time?
The girl lifted her nose and sniffed. She seemed to have caught onto some scent, and stared at the postman's pocket. He took out some breadcrumbs from his pocket and showed them to the girl.

"These are just old breadcrumbs. I was thinking of feeding them to the seagulls..."

The girl bit into the breadcrumbs. She choked in her hurry to eat, but the postman did not stop her. He laughed while patting her back.

"Nobody's gonna take it. So don't ru...sh... ouch!"

The girl tried to eat the postman's finger along with the breadcrumbs. Blood dripped from his wound.
The postman caught the girl's eyes.

"Hahaha... you're quite the impatient one, huh."

The postman forced himself to smile. The girl merely stared at the dripping blood, expressionless.
This child is strange... forgetting to even wipe the blood off his fingers, the postman stared at the mysterious girl.

The next day.

The girl was sitting on top of the table when he visited her room. The postman took out a white ribbon from his pocket and showed it to her. The girl reacted and held out her hand. She seemed to be used to this by now.

"It's a ribbon. Girls use it to tie their hair. Here, I'll tie it for you."

As the postman touched her hair, her body stiffened for a moment before relaxing.

"What's wrong? Your hair's all wet, did you go out?"

The girl did not respond.

"...guess I can't help it. Here."

The postman dried the girl's hair with his own handkerchief. At the same time, the girl played with the white ribbon aimlessly. He saw a spot of light on her hair. He could see the last lights of the day from the thin cracks in the room. The postman squinted his eyes.

"The sun at this time of the day is my favorite... it feels very gentle."

He heard a swooshing sound behind him and felt the air move. When he turned around, the girl disappeared. Where is she? One look at the table gave him the answer. The girl was sitting beneath the table, shaking.

"Ah, what's wrong? Are you afraid of something?"

The girl pointed at the golden sunlight that filtered in.

"...I see. You lived in dark places for too long, so your eyes have become weak against light."

That said, she couldn't live like that forever. I'll bring this child outside with me someday. Then I can give her a healthier lifestyle...the gentle sun of dusk moved slowly.

4

"Now that you mentioned it, it started around the same time as the arrival of that ship." The female owner of the materials shop said while moving her ponderous girth. A few weeks ago, an ancient but big ship floated onto the coastline. It looked like it suffered through a heavy storm, and no survivors were found. No, that wasn't entirely correct – nobody was on the ship when the town dwellers discovered it.

"I've seen the postman dally around there recently, so you should go an ask him."

NieR bought some natural gum as a show of thanks and left the shop. Weiss floated along and talked to NieR.

"The postman, huh... brings up memories of the old woman. Now that I think about it..."
When Weiss began talking, NieR noticed something.

"Kainé!"

Kainé motioned for him to come over inside the alleyways. She doesn't go into inhabited towns due to her self-awareness of Shade-possession. Discrimination hurts people. Both the ones on the receiving end and the ones dishing out the damage. Therefore, there could be only 2 reasons for Kainé to step into the town – either something terribly good has happened, or something horrendously bad. Feeling a sense of wrongness, NieR headed towards Kainé. The sense of wrongness only worsened when Kainé began with "There was this coastline with a broken ship..."

Clouds covered the sky, and the air foretold of coming storms.

5

The wind raged. The huge ship continued creaking, and planted seeds of anxiety within all that observed. The girl and the postman were in their usual room. She was clinging to the postman's clothes.

"Haha...so there are things even you fear."

The postman took out some food, but the girl shook her head.

"What's wrong? Aren't you hungry?"

The girl nodded.

The deep voice of the ocean's rage could be heard afar. The girl was shaking.

"Okay!"

The postman stood up abruptly, and began singing while stamping his feet. He was off-tone, but the simplistic nature of the song seeped through. The girl stiffened her body. "Ha ha...my bad my bad. This is called a song."

"You make sounds from the bottom of your belly, so you'll feel better."

"Songs are wisdom that carry us through the hardships of life.

"That's why I like singing. I'm pretty bad, but..."

The postman's song continued.

Eventually, the girl tried to mimic him and sing. Her song doesn't sound like one – it didn't even sound like a voice. It was a horrible sound like the squishing of paper bags. However, the postman was overjoyed and clapped his hands. "You're good! You're good!"

The girl saw the happiness that overtook the postman, and continued singing her terrible song, embarrassed.
The girl's song resounded throughout the broken ship. A beam of light shone into the ship.
The girl stopped singing.

"It's fine. That's not lightning, it's just the beacon from the lighthouse.
...an acquaintance of mine lived there before. She's already dead.

I'd often pass by her house when I delivered letters.
To tell you the truth, it was an exhausting job...but now it just feels nostalgic."

The girl did not comprehend the postman's words. He merely patted her head.

"I always loved loneliness. I'm satisfied with just delivering these letters every day,
written by people who felt deeply about the recipient."

"But recently, I was thinking that I'd like to become a person who felt deeply enough about someone to write a letter for them."

"...won't you come to my place? I'd like to have a daughter, actually."

The postman pulled her hand, but the girl shook herself free from his grasp. She shook her head, and pointed at the cabin floor. The girl began singing in her croaking voice again.

"You like being here, huh. It's a pity, but I guess I can't...."

The postman looked at the floor she was pointing at. Something was off. He couldn't see well within the darkness, but some sort of liquid was flowing. He touched it lightly. It felt slippery. The beacon from the lighthouse shone into the room, and he saw his blood-stained hand under the light.
The postman looked at the girl. Only the broken songs of joy resounded throughout the room.

6

It was difficult to see the whole of the ship even from a hill. It was just that big. The black ship tilted against the reefs, and its side had a big hole. Anything that stuck up like masts was mostly broken.
It must've been a heavy storm.

"Is that the ship?"

NieR asked Kainé. They came here because Kainé said, "There might be Shades in the ship." As a person possessed by a Shade, she could tell the presence of Shades nearby. She even understood their words, but she kept this fact a secret from NieR and others. Kainé answered.

"Yeah... but it's not that clear-cut."

The sensations of the left half of her body told her that "something" was in the broken boat. However, it felt completely different from the usual Shades. She never felt like this before. Seeing her confusion, Weiss joked.

"So, the hussy's only strength is worth nothing here."

"Weiss!"

Emil scolded Weiss.

The normal Kainé would probably reply with something like "damn paper" or "shit book," but she kept her silence. Everyone felt the anxiousness permeating the air. Something is going to go wrong.

NieR drew his sword.

"We just have to go and see for ourselves."

7

A dark room. A bloody floor.

That person isn't here anymore, so it's okay. The girl shook in the corner of the room. A huge black claw grew out beyond her wrist. Why...did it come to this? Did that person leave... Because of this blackened body? I want to talk normally with him... I don't want to be hated by him ...I don't want to be feared by him.

Thinking of the postman, she tried to stop herself from transforming into a Shade. I have to... use more power. If that person saw me like this... I want the power to keep my human form.

The power to bathe in sunlight. The power to produce beautiful sounds. Pale streaks of water flowed from her eyes. With her strong will, she managed to revert her black arm to a human's. If I eat more humans...

Her lips shook. "If I do that, I can become human."
She said in a voice that cannot be heard by humans – a voice like scraping metals, the voice of a Shade.

8

Her throat felt uncomfortably dry. Her hands weren't even sweating despite their tight hold on her swords. The further she walked into the boat, the colder it got.

"Are you okay?"

NieR called out to Kainé, noticeably worried at her pale face. She lifted the corners of her mouth and answered. Not really. But nothing's going to be resolved even if I tell you. The problem lies ahead.

"He he he he... we're closing in on something bad, aren't we... Kainé?"

Tyrann spoke up in an unpleasant tone. He's always like that. Not at all obliged to help us. He's fine with just watching anyone suffer. However, even Tyrann felt that something was wrong. He sounded completely different from his usual self. Kainé focused on the Shade half of her body.

She began to see the truth behind the coldness she felt. It's a soundless vibration that resonated with her Shade part. Nobody but Kainé could understand the feelings brought on by that resonation. If she had to put it into words, it would be "fear". Kainé frowned. Me? Scared? She couldn't come to terms with that, and merely proceeded further into the boat with NieR and the others. The furthest part of the boat.
NieR stopped within the darkness.

"The room beyond here is the last one."

Kainé tried to say something. Don't. Before the words could even be formed, they died in her dry throat.

The room had a simple design. A table and a chair were all there was. Nothing resembling a window was spotted – this was probably the captain's room. Maps and shelves of books were lined up neatly, and a small girl stood beside the table. Black hair. Pale skin. Dirty clothing. Red eyes. Kainé understood everything immediately.

The truth behind this coldness.

"Hehe... this one here... is pretty dangerous..."

Even Tyrann spoke in a fearful tone. That's right. The girl was a Shade, but not a normal one. She was significantly more "concentrated." She existed with a "concentration" a few hundred times beyond a normal Shade. A single Shade has the size of several humans put together, but that's its extent. To attain a greater size, "fusion" of numerous Shades is required. By fusing, Shades grow both in power and in size. The Shade that attacked NieR's village and the fucker that killed her grandmother belonged to that category. A fused Shade contained the melded consciousness of many Shades, and the bigger they get, the more powerful they are. Kainé gained this piece of information from her battle experiences.

But the girl in front of her is different. She was a dozen times stronger than that fucker. Kainé could tell from the coldness within her that let out an agonizing scream. Despite all that, she's so small... Kainé knew what her size meant. The girl was keeping her expanding body in check by applying the same amount of force in the opposite direction. In other words, the "strength" she felt right now is but a tiny fraction of the girl's power.

The vibration she felt was a result of the girl's power that threatens to overflow them even now. All she felt were the Shade energies that seeped through. She shuddered at the thought of a complete release of those energies. Tyrann spoke up with a shaking voice. "Even this pressure we feel now... is as simple as breathing for that one... ha ha ha ha... shit's about to get real... huh?"

There's another thing she learned about Shades. The more Shades involved in fusing, the more reasoning the finished product loses. Just like how the fused Shade in the Aerie became nothing but a giant piece of magic blasting... thing, a fused Shade gets more and more stupid as they fuse with more and more Shades. The whole business isn't as clear-cut as "the more you fuse the stronger you get", as some fused Shades with a lesser amount of Shades are stronger. Worst case scenario, this small Shade wasn't fused and only had one consciousness. In other words, this one is dangerous enough to attain this level of strength without fusing at all. The air was freezing with danger.

The girl didn't even blink. NieR and Emil did not move. They didn't know what to do. It was like standing next to a piece of explosive that goes off at the slightest movement.

"Huh? What are you guys doing here?"

A voice came from the direction of the entrance. The postman stood there. "Man, you should've just told me if you're coming here... I have something to discuss with you guys anyways", the man spoke in a light tone while placing his bag on the floor. When he came close to Kainé, he said

"Excuse me, but I sort of want to know...about that Lunar thing or whatever..."

It all sounded like nonsense. Kainé moved her dry lips. She had to tell them. She couldn't make a sound.
But she turned towards NieR and Emil and mouthed

(This one is a Shade)

The girl suddenly moved. She stared at Kainé. An ominous vibrating sound could be heard. The moment that the postman turned back to look at his bag. The girl exploded in a shower of black. A number of black lances emerged from the girl's body. At the same time, NieR, who was right next to the girl, immediately brought his guard up. An onslaught of lances pierced the ceiling and the floor. Kainé and Emil grabbed the postman and made towards the exit. Behind them, NieR was thrown back. He made towards them and shouted at them to run. The Shade's thoughts flowed into Kainé's head.

Why am I a Shade? Please, someone, tell me! Why am I not human?
Why are you taking that person away from me?

Don't let your guard down! Tyrann's voice lacked its usual playful tone.

Just as they emerged from the corridor, a huge onslaught of the Shade's lances assaulted them from the walls, the ceiling, and the floor. They grew from the girl and made to chase after the escapees. NieR ran ahead while cutting down the lances, but couldn't deal with all of them. Kainé moved on to support him and handed over the postman to Emil. Emil picked up the unconscious postman with his mouth dashed.

"The exit's here."

The moment that NieR shouted at the sight of the sunlit exit, several black lances blocked it. Kainé jumped over Emil and delivered a flying kick towards the exit, breaking through the Shade's blockage.
Kainé somersaulted out of the boat, but the exit was blocked again before Emil could move out.
NieR was close behind.

"Emil!"

Swatting the black lances to the side, NieR tried to protect Emil, but several Shades' hands attacked them from above. The impact of their attacks caused the postman to fall from Emil's mouth.

"Ah! Mr. Postman!"

NieR and Emil were blasted out of the boat. They rolled over a few times in the sand. Kainé turned around. Black lances broke out of the boat in different places. They seemed like they'd continue to extend, but they wrapped around themselves like a huge snake instead. Another few dozens of snakes emerged from the boat. The fog cleared outside the boat, the sun was shining so brightly that NieR and the others have to squint their eyes. It's bright enough that any normal Shade would die immediately. However, paying no heed to that fact, the black snake exposed itself to sunlight. Its surface was burnt off by direct sunlight, but new cells were created at a much higher speed. "It doesn't die…under direct sunlight…"

Emil despaired.

Eventually, an egg like shape formed amidst the thrashing snakes. The egg nurtured by the surrounding snakes grew bigger and bigger. Its surface cracked and began to peel off like fruits. The peels formed two huge wings. And within the wings, the upper half of the girl's body grew in the middle of the egg. Her blackened body was shaking, and seemed to have grown straight from the deck. However, just her upper body was well over 10 meters. More wings grew from her upper body. Kainé knew that they were mere "extras". The huge amount of magic left over found no practical use and merely gave unnecessary wings to the Shade. The wingspans were almost 100 meters long. It was already a few times the length of the entire boat, yet it continued to expand while smoke came out of the Shade's body.

The Shade's figure that bathed under the sun had a surreal beauty to it.

The postman lay across her palm. The giant Shade that carried him carefully let out a roar. Kainé and her companions had to cover their ears from the sound's impact. The resulting vibration made them see double. When the impact receded, its sound created one set of music scales.

It was the song taught to the girl by the postman.

9

The expanding girl's consciousness was in turmoil with anger. Fear of not knowing what was to become of her, and hatred towards the humans that tried to take the postman away from her flowed from her heart.

> No matter how much I eat humans I wasn't satisfied!
> Nobody ever helped me! Only this person was nice to me! He taught me what gentleness was!
>
> I…I will become human! I'll speak the same words…as this person …I'll live with him! Just a bit more.

She covered the postman with both of her hands, taking great care not to injure him. Just a bit more…and she'd gain the power to become a human.

> "Hehehe… no idea what's going on in her head, but she really wants to eat us!"

Tyrann shouted. Kainé knew that he was merely putting on a facade. The postman regained his consciousness among the loud sounds and shaking. He didn't seem to know what was going on at first, but widened his eyes at fear when he saw the girl's enlarged face. The postman tried to scream, but the sound died in his throat.

> Don't be afraid. Because I… I'll become a human soon.

The girl's smile was merciful, and she embraced the postman who was frozen with fear. Her arm transformed. Black letters appeared on her arm, and several spikes grew from it. The spikes shaped themselves into weapons and floated alongside the girl. A few claws grew from her back as well.

> "Run!"

The moment that Kainé shouted, the black spikes assaulted NieR. The girl threw the "lances" she made with her huge arms. Sand was blasted all over the place wherever the lances landed.
NieR shouted while rolling to dodge.

> "I never knew that they could throw their own bodies!"
>
> "That one isn't normal!"

The Shade had more and enough magic left over. It's not going to hurt her at all to forge her body into weapons. Emil shouted at Kainé while blocking the spikes with his magic field.

"I'll try to attack it!"

A few thin strands of light escaped from Emil's staff and aimed themselves at the Shade. The next moment, balls of magic were hurled along the strands to the Shade. They hit the Shade with an explosion and blew off two of its wings. However, they immediately grew back – three of them, in fact. NieR shouted.

"How... is it immortal?"

"I'll finish it off here! You guys run!"

Kainé took a huge jump and bombarded the Shade with magic in the air. All her attacks were blocked by the Shade's arms on the deck. But Kainé wasn't discouraged, and resumed her attack while charging her sword with magic. Weaving through the Shade's counterattacks, she closed in on the girl's main body. However, she wasn't headed towards the girl's chest area or head, but towards the hands enclosing the postman.

"This one's pretty important to you, huh!?"

Kainé swung her sword in a downwards arc towards the postman's position. The girl, who remained expressionless until now, widened her eyes. Before Kainé's sword could reach the postman, a number of the Shade's arms blocked her assault. Sparks flew from the clash between magic and Shade energy.
However, Kainé suddenly changed the angle of her strike. Her sword reached the girl's head.

All of the Shade's defenses were protecting the postman, so it had no time to generate new arms before Kainé struck true. The Shade turned its face at the last moment and was spared from a direct hit, but Kainé's sword still tore apart its face. Black blood gushed out in heaps. A strange scream. The postman was thrown against the deck. The Shade was covering its face, and only when searching for the postman did it realize that NieR and Emil were preparing to launch Black Lance at its maximum potential.

"This ends here!"

Magic shot out with NieR's shout and Emil's roar. The huge amount of magic condensed into lance-form assaulted the Shade while spinning at high speeds. The Shade tried to block with its left arm, but the huge lance tore away its entire limb from its shoulder. The girl screamed.

"It's still not dead?!"

Movement was spotted in the Shade's wound. It was like watching a few hundred snakes.

Human... a human... I'll... The girl looked up at the sky. I'll become a human!!!

An unbelievable number of tentacles extended from the Shade's torn wound. The tentacles became a few hundred sharp swords and ripped apart the landscape. Kainé was in close proximity, so no matter how hard she defended herself, the tentacles pierced her left arm and right leg. She fell through the floor. NieR was still cooling down from the huge amount of magic he exerted, and was attacked by the Shade's swords.

Emil knocked NieR away. Black shadows surrounded his left arm.

"Gyahhhhhhhh!"

Emil's scream was feral. His entire left arm was torn off. NieR tried to help Emil, but was blasted away by the swords second onslaught. Swinging around a fearful number of swords, the Shade continued screaming.

I'll kill you.... I'll kill you all!

The Shade who used to be a girl screamed while hugging her torn body. She shuddered with shallow breaths like that of an animal. She was strong, but even her regeneration could not catch up with the amount of damage she suffered. However, NieR and the others weren't faring so well either. No one could stand. The Shade took one look at NieR and grabbed him with its black hand.

"Ah... NieR...is!"

Emil looked at the sky while shaking. Kainé was barely standing among the puddle of her own blood.
Just when the Shade was about to put NieR in its mouth

“Stop!”

It was the postman who regained consciousness. He ran towards the Shade with unsteady steps. The postman took a feeble piece of splinter as his weapon and faced off against the Shade with shaky knees.

“You...monster!”

You said to live together...?

“Disappear! You man-eater!

But you said to sing songs

“Let go of that person!”

I’m trying to become human to live... with you

“I hate you!”

The girl stopped.

She looked at her body again. Black smoke emerged from where her appendages were cut off. She could probably recover from the damage she suffered. However, that proves that she’s a Shade. What is this ugly body? Didn’t I want to become a human?

With a body like this... I... I...

She looked at the postman. His eyes were shaking with anger and fear.

“Die!”

His words pierced her. The sound of her broken wings falling into the ocean was heard. She knew that she could no longer maintain this body. She couldn’t even remember her life’s meaning. She dropped NieR. Slowly, she lifted her head. The dusk shone with golden sunlight – the very same one that they promised to watch together.

Ah... and the world... Is so beautiful...........

Kainé jumped at her from behind. The girl didn’t even try to struggle. It was a disgustingly raw sound. The girl’s decapitated head fell slowly. Her huge body turned into black sand and lost its form. Even the black sands were blown along by the sea wind and disappeared. The broken ship.
The dusk was reflected off the sea and gleamed like a jewel.

10

The second floor of Seafront's bar housed a simple inn. The bed makes a pretty bad sound, but it's better than sleeping outside. Kainé stood, dragging her hurting feet along. It has been three days. The postman forced Kainé, NieR, and Emil to stay at the inn to thank them for saving the town. Normally they'd refuse, but the damages they suffered were severe, so they accepted his kindness.

Emil was still sleeping, but his destroyed left arm had regenerated until the wrist area. The mechanics behind it remained unknown, but he should regain his former arm in another day.

NieR's injuries were light in comparison, so he was helping the postman along with the shitty book. It's about time for us to leave this place.

She noticed the presence of a piece of paper between her breasts.

It dropped from the broken Shade's body and looked like a letter. Something was written in ugly letters resembling worms more than anything. She thought that it was for the postman, but he told her to take care of whatever the monster left behind. "I didn't know that she was such a monster..."

Black letters appeared on the postman's foot. Kainé opened the letter. Tyrann seemed very interested.

"What's this?"

"A letter. Something the Shade wrote for the postman."

"Gahahaha! What ugly handwriting!"

"It was probably trying to copy the pattern as best as it could."



"...what's written on there?"

Kainé did not answer and simply tore the letter into pieces. Bright sunlight filtered in through the window.

The ocean seen from within seemed so peaceful, and the battle at the ship felt like an incident long past.
Broken pieces of the letter fell from Kainé's hand.

On one of the corners, the words "Thank you" were written over and over again in ugly lettering.

CD2/02: Lust

Translation by/u/spffn

※ This takes place at the northern exit of NieR's village, 3 months after the Shadowlord has been defeated and NieR has been forgotten.

※ Kainé survives by taking requests from villagers to protect them from the Shades. Although she loses her magical powers, her strength remains because of her genes.

※ The client is the vice-captain of the youth trope. Kainé sounds uninterested and blunt towards him, but she actually lusts after tough looking men with a tan.

	(Kainé yells as she attacks a Shades.)
Kainé:	Get the hell away from me, you worthless shit! Ahh! (It strikes her, and she hits the ground, gasping for air. She spits.) Oh, so you're a persistent little bastard, huh?! Damned, stupid Shade! You can't run from me! (She finishes it off.) Is that all? It's not enough. Killing them, ripping them to pieces— None of it is enough!
Man:	(distantly) Hey! (he runs up, panting) You finally rid us of those Shades! Hey, you okay?
Kainé:	What?
Man:	You just look really tired, so...
Kainé:	It's none of your business.
Man:	All right then... Still, though. That was amazing. You're amazing. You took down those Shades single-handedly. If only any of us in the village have the courage to try something like that. Here's the money we promised. It's not much, but please, take it. The Forest of Myth is safe for us to pass through again, thanks to you. Much obliged.
Kainé:	Sure.
Man:	If we run into trouble in the future, we'll be sure to call on you again.
Kainé:	Hmph.
	(The man's sister runs up as Kainé walks off in another direction with her payment.)
Sister:	Brother!
Man:	Yes?
Sister:	Are the Shades gone now?
Man:	The people of Seafront were right to sing her praises, Ms. Kainé was astounding. The village men could barely drive the Shades back, but she crushed them.
Sister:	Brother, is this really okay?
Man:	What do you mean?
Sister:	Well, you know... She's... She's sort of scary.
Man:	What are you talking about? We paid her to come help us and she did. Ms. Kainé deserves respect for it, no more speaking ill of her.
Sister:	I'm sorry.
Man:	The Shade inside of her is long gone, she's now just a normal human. Yet... she still lives outside of the village walls. I'm just worried about her.

Sister: I see… Brother, it's still dangerous out here, we should probably head back.

Man: Yeah.

(Kainé startles awake from a dream.)

Kainé: That same dream again…? Why, damn it… Why again?! What am I missing?!
Why that dream, every single night?!

(Shades begin to emerge from the trees around her and she gasps.)

Shades? Heh… Perfect timing. I woke up in bad mood, so while I'm killing you bastards, I'm gonna fuck your shit up so bad, that ought to cheer me right up! Come on! Playing dead won't work on me! (She stabs it.) Who's next?! What's wrong?! You'll never beat me keeping your distance. You shits ought to act more like the monsters you are and rush me as a group! Show me what you're made of!

(A girl's scream echos in the distance.)

Kainé: From the village? Then—These Shades we're a diversion? Ha, hahaha—Damn, that's clever. Haha, this is going to be a real treat, then! I'm going to grind you cunning bastards down into minced meat, and then serve you up like a fucking Shade sandwich!

(Screaming, as people flee the Shades attacking the village.)

Woman: Somebody—!

Villager: They've broken down the gate! Head for the shopping district—

Man: We can't! The Shades have gotten in there, too!

Villager: That can't be!

Man: At this rate, the village will be—

(Men and women scream as the Shades attack them,
before Kainé appears and strikes them down.)

Man: It's Kainé—Ms. Kainé!

Kainé: Don't move, this is my fight. I'm going to take my sweet time killing them all, one by one!
(She fights, the Shades attempting to attack her with magic.) You think that puny shit is going to hurt me? You must be a pack of fucking idiots!

Villager: The village, it's going to…

Man: Let's leave this place to Kainé! Quickly! Everyone run, now!

Woman: Head for the library! We're already begun evacuating and barricading the doors!

Kainé: I'll kill you! Kill you, rip out your guts and chop you into tiny pieces! You'll all be nothing but piles of meat! (She laughs hysterically.)

Sister: (crying) Brother! Brother, please!

Man: It's okay…

Sister: No! No, it's not! What should I do?!

Man: The S-Shades… What happened?

Sister: Ms. Kainé came to the village, and she—

(Kainé kicks down the door and enters their house, panting.)

Sister: Ms. Kainé...?

Man: Kainé... So you came for us... You saved the village... Th... ank... you...

Sister: Brother? Brother! No... it can't be... You can't die!

(Kainé kicks up the man's corpse.)

Sister: Ms. Kainé! What are you doing?! (Kainé strikes it again.) No!

Kainé: I'll kill all of them. (The sound of ripping cloth and the body falling somewhere.) But it's never enough—Shade after Shade after Shade I cut down, so why... why are people still dying?! What am I even here for?!
(Kainé begins to cry.) Damn it. Why,... Why am I...

Sister: Stop it... Please, stop it. What are you doing?! What are you doing to him?! No—Don't! Somebody, anybody, please help!

Villager: (outside the house) She's what?

Woman: (outside the house) Ms. Kainé is...?!

Kainé: What did I...

Sister: Please hurry, that woman—She's—

Kainé: Why... Why did I... Damn it, I...

Villager: Look out, she's getting away!

(Kainé flees from the village, her crying turning to ugly laughter, then back into sobs.)

Kainé: I can't—I can't anymore!

(She finally stops next to a flower.)

Kainé: This is, a Lunar Tear? Why here of all places? Something about it... I can't stop crying... (She sinks to her knees next to it, crying.) Somebody... Please tell me why... anybody...

YOKO FACT 15 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

On Kainé being intersexual:

Natori: That was partially inspired by Eishima's short story. Since NieR was like that (laughs) [Natori is speaking about NieR selling his body], maybe Kainé had that side to her as well. It was normal for her. However, there are people who couldn't accept that as normal. I wrote it in hopes of depicting those differences. We didn't really put much emphasis on her being intersexual in the game, so I wanted to write about that somewhere. In the game, we only touched on her being bullied as a child.

Did you intentionally not emphasize the intersex issue in the game? What were the reasons behind that?

Yoko: To me, Kainé being an intersexual wasn't really a point of importance. Since people like that do exist, we just don't know about them. I was actually surprised that it garnered so much attention after the game was released.



Around the World in Eighty Days

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It tells the story of Emil trying to find a new body after his battle against Popola.

This English version was brought to you by Chinese Forums.

Jumping and spinning, a traveling head. Flying *and circling, but still a head.*

Day 1

Walking on the desert is such hard work. Ah! I got buried again! Gah! But landing on the sand isn't that bad, at least I didn't land on rocks. Even sister's body may not be strong enough to survive that kind of fall.

The people of Façade are really something to be able to walk like this no problem. Speaking of which, even though NieR had some trouble walking on sand, he is still a lot faster than me right now. Looks like I need to find a way to restore my body.

Hmm, what should I do? It's just sand everywhere. Could I use magic to create a body using sand? No wait, how can I even use magic without my hands? And I don't even have a staff. How troubling...

No no no, there is no use just standing around and doing nothing. I'll try it! Maybe it'll be easier than I think. Even if I don't have my staff, I just need to concentrate on my magic...

....

............Oh the sand has settled. Looks like my magic has nothing to do with my hands and my staff. Yay! I should be able to make a body now, and I can walk around as usual...

Eh? AH! It sunk! My head sunk into my body! Ahh... It fell apart...... Looks like sand isn't strong enough after all. Oh well, as long as I can use magic, I should be able to restore my body, if I have some stronger material to work with. I'll just keep trying.

First I need to leave the desert. It'd be nice if I can just roll around on dirt. Oh! I'm buried again!

Day 9

I'm finally out of the desert. I've had enough staring at the same scenery every single day. I'm finally on top of something that isn't sand. This time it's rocks, and it's really sturdy. Looks like it's too sturdy and too uneven, it's so hard to move around! Ow, I just bumped my head.

This is different from the desert, if I continue to move like this it'll just chip away at my HP. I really need to make a body. It's rocks everywhere, I should be able to make a strong body this time.

Hiyah!

It's so hard without my staff. I wonder if I can use my voice instead. It'll be a bit weird, but I don't care as long as I can use magic.

Good! I'll make a strong body this time! I need to get back to the others. Kainé and Weiss must be fighting again.

Eh? I-I can't move?! Why?!

..................This body. It's too heavy.

Day 17

I've finally gotten out of that rock field. Thanks to the experience, my head, and my HP took quite a beating, but it's no use talking about that now.

The ground that I am on is quite normal, the hardness of the mud being just right. I'm so happy! There is even a beautiful lake here. Unlike the Northern Plains, there are some waterfowls here. They must be able to live peacefully without the Shades. I feel like I can find some raw material here.

What should I make? I need something that can support my head but not too heavy. Something light... Something light... Oh, I got it!

What about waterfowl feathers? I've read that bird feathers are made out of keratin. It's rather soft, but if I collect a bunch of them and fix them with magic, then they should be strong enough. And more importantly, they're light! If I want to move quickly, I need to go with something that's lightweight!

There are so many waterfowls here, so there should be a lot of feathers falling off naturally right? If I just wait in the downwind, I should be able to get a bunch of feathers.

Anyways, I need to wait for the wind to come.

Day 24

...

It doesn't work. Not a single feather has flown here, and it doesn't look like it's the season for them to grow new feathers. There is no choice. I need to forcefully take them! I need to catch the waterfowls and pluck out their feathers! No, I won't be too cruel, I'll just take a bit and leave them enough feathers to fly.

Let's go! Charge! Eh! How could I catch any waterfowls without hands?! Oh no! I fell into the lake.

.... *pants* I early got tetanus from that. My entire body, no wait, my entire head is wet. I get it. Even though I'm just a head, I seem to be still able to swim. Next time if NieR fell into the water, I should be able to help. Yay!

Day 26

In the end, I only got a tiny amount of feathers. I probably only got enough to make a single finger. Maybe I should just make some clothes first. Appearance is very important too. Though it sucks that the clothes would smell like birds.

Eh? Why is a wolf there? ! I'm not edible?! I said I'm not the birdies' friend! Ahhh!

That was scary. Good thing my head is okay, the only thing that got taken away is the feather dress. But you can't even eat feathers, what a silly wolf.

But don't wolves live in the desert? Is it separated from the pack? But it doesn't look like it belongs to the same pack as the one that attacked Façade.

Day 31

It's here againnnnnn! No this isn't a wolf, it's a huge beast?! What's it called? This feline carnivore. No there is no time for this! I gotta run! Or I will really get eaten! If I get hit by those sharp claws, even sister's body would die!

Ahhhhh! Eh? I'm not eaten? I'm just getting rolled around. Oh, it's doing it again.

Ahhhhh! W-wait, it's using me as a toy? So this is the playful nature of feline carnivores?

Ahhhhh! I don't care, stop rolling me around! I'm not a ball!

Ahhhhh! Right, couldn't I just use magic to fly away!?

.........Oh, I managed to escape from there. I still feel really dizzy.

Day 33

I've been looking back at what I was doing this whole time. I should've figured out that I could fly long ago, I could've saved myself from all the pain in the rock field, and I could have left the desert much earlier.

I have also been thinking about the issue of finding materials. The idea of using a single type of raw material is wrong. We needed so many different materials when we were strengthening weapons in the Junk Heap. Though I should think it over if I were to go to the Junk heap. It really creeps me out every time I look into the younger brother's eyes. I heard he cut off his own arm, I wonder if the rumor is true.

Speaking of which, how should I collect raw materials? I guess I should find some on the ground, or by the sea. It's important to put some hard work into it.

Day 59

I don't even see the lake anymore, guess I've gotten pretty far. I've been going to a bunch of unknown places. Even if I haven't been around the world yet, I must have been at least ¼ in.

I thought it would be safer to fly at first, but it's surprisingly dangerous. Not only are there dangerous bird up here, there are also Shades with wings. Of course, I could fight them off with magic.

Still, my luggage...those raw materials I collected... the more I am carrying, the harder it is to fight. I need to use magic to carry my luggage, to keep myself flying, and to attack the enemies. I need to do all three things at once! I overexerted so much my eyes shot out lasers.

But there is too much luggage now, so I'm just rolling around the place. I can find iron core, natural rubber, clay, etc. Around the sea, I can find some drifting wood and black pearl. But that fight with the giant spider sure was scary.

Day 66

It's Seafront! I'm finally here, and I'm so close to NieR's village. I've gotten a bunch of raw material too, I just need to fly there right now. Oh, I want to see NieR right now! And Kainé and Weiss.

Eh? W-Why are there a bunch of seagulls flying towards me?! Maybe they think I'm invading their territory?!

No, no, no, it's a misunderstanding! Don't come! It's hard enough carrying all this stuff!

....

I fell in the water at the end. Never thought the seagulls would be so violent. This sucks! If I've gotten wet with sea water, I will be all sticky even if I dry up.

Oh! Isn't this the rusted bucket that NieR used to strengthen his weapon? Maybe I can use this to strengthen my body as well.

Diving in the sea once in a while is kind of fun. Wow! What kind of fish is that! Oh right, it's the Dunkleosteus, NieR had a lot of trouble catching this fish. It was a challenge for him even after NieR received training from that weird old guy.

No! I'm not edible! My head is really hard, you'll break your teeth! Eh! It wants to swallow me whole? Noooooo!

..................Thank goodness I survived. I really need to create my body so I don't have to run into these things anymore.

Day 80

I should be able to make a better body with all this material. I hope I can make something that is powerful and cool. Okay, let's start! Put the material on the floor, concentrate...

boom*

Eh? ....W-what's with this bad feeling? Why is the stopped clock smoking?! No?! There are sparks flying out of the pyrite?! Did I mess up?! Ah, it's burning it's burning! The old book is burning! It looks like it'll blow up?! Ahhhhh!!!

.........Ow, ow, ow.........how did.... Looks like I flew very far. Wait t-this... isn't this the desert! I got sent to the beginning again?

Oh, Sebastian was right when he said I am only good at screwing things up. It turns out he was serious.

How will I be able to restore my body if this keeps up? Kainé and Weiss will probably kill each other if I don't hurry. Kainé is so violent, and Weiss is so annoying.

I need to get a move on! I want to see NieR soon!

First, I need to get across the desert... well...





The Lost World

This novella was released in the book GRIMOIRE NieR. It is considered the canonical ending of NieR, Ending E.

This English version was brought to you by “Chinese Forums”.

THE END IS NIER. THE END OF NIER.

Kainé continues to have nightmares after NieR disappears, with a feeling that she has lost something precious. Kainé remembers saving a girl named Yonah from the Shadow Lord’s castle, and that the Shades Tyrann is gone for unknown reasons. Every time she thinks back to that moment, there is always something flashing before her, but dissipating right away.

Troubled by these nightmares, Kainé decides to take her anger out on some Shades by going to the Forest of Myth after hearing about the presence of Shades there. As she arrives, she notices that the forest has become something entirely different. It no longer looks like a forest, but instead a fusion of forest and machines, with power cables covering the ground like tree roots, and every step covered in slick green machine oil and sap.

Kainé arrives at the most eye-catching tree in the forest, and suddenly, the cable-like vines form together in the shape of a young man.

> “Hello, I...”

Before he can finish, Kainé lops his head off. The body falls apart, and reforms in another area.

> “How violent. Allow me to introduce myself. I am 🅿 ❶!Γ⍰ , the overseer of this forest.”

“🅿 ❶!Γ⍰ ?...” Kainé paused. The young man continues:

> “You don’t understand the language my name is in, so call me anything you like, whether it is the “overseer” or “young man”. You probably have a lot of things you don’t understand right now.
>
> So, what do you want to know?
>
> 1. About the forest
> 2. About me
> 3. About the future
>
> Pick one.

Before Kainé can answer, the young man starts explaining. First, about the Forest of Myth: it is the terminal computer where the ancient people studied the demonic element and quantum physics. The area is entering its final phase, and the shutdown sequence has already begun.

As the young man continues his explanation, swarms of P-33 drones rush in and attack Kainé.

On to the second point. The mysterious young man claims to be an existence similar to that of Grimoire Weiss. He controls all the demonic elements, the life and death of all gestalts and replicants, and the information of everything within the area.

A humanoid P-33 robot appears as Kainé dispatches of several P-33 drones. She remembers fighting the robot in the Junk Heap, alongside someone.

“That’s the most important person to you? If you can defeat these kids, I’ll tell you why you are here, and the person that you cannot remember,” the young man laughs as he summons a robot that looks exactly like Kainé.

“The third point – the future. As I said, this world is a failure.
We don’t need robots and humans, and I have lost my reason to exist”

Emil, with an extra pair of arms that accidentally formed when he was doing reconstruction work on his body appears out of nowhere and joins Kainé’s battle against the android Kainé. Emil notices that the tree is the source of power for everything, and the two concentrate their attacks at the enemy’s core.

The scenery, the trees, the ground, and the human face dissolve into a giant puddle.

> “Using the power of magic to fuse machines, humans, and plants together, this is the truth behind this world! Amazing! Amazing! A replicant like you can reach this level!
> Amazing!” The young man babbles on as he disappears.

Power cables are whip around in the wind as a storm brew. Emil protects Kainé as she approaches the magical power source. She continues to swing her sword in the overpowering white light. Suddenly, everything quiets down, as though she has arrived at the border between reality and a dream world.

Kainé feels that something important is in front of her.
She tries touching it, and can vaguely tell that it is a shape of a person.

> “.....ine.... don’t....”

Tears flow down Kainé’s face.

> “.......go back..... do not.......... come here....”

> “......don’t.....”

She grabs on to it as it slips away, losing something important again.

> "This is pissing me off! This is my life! I decide how I’ll live!
> I don’t need anyone telling me what to do! It’s my decision to die for you as your sword!"

Kainé cries out of fear of losing that important thing again, angry at how powerless she feels.

> "I must, I must, I must get it back! I’ll get it back no matter what price I have to pay!"

Someone pushes Kainé from the back, helping her move forward.

> “Stop screwing around. How can you just disappear all by yourself!
> I am the one who will decide what the meaning of my life is!
> I get to do whatever I want with my own life”

> “GET BACK HERE YOU #$#$@$#@$@#$@#$ BASTARD”

... .

The white light dissipates, and the clear blue sky reappears.

The Forest of Myth disappears, leaving behind a giant techno-organic flower. From afar, it resembles the Lunar Tear. At the stamen, Kainé holds a person that is important to her.

This person that she is used to see is kind, and in deep slumber.

Emil floats closer.

Kainé looks up to the sky, thinking back to how someone helped push her forward within that white light, when she clearly heard “I’ll leave this guy to you, lingerie woman—”

They meet again.

An Emil with a slightly different body, an older Kainé, and a younger version of “him”.

Yes... His name is...

YOKO FACT 16 – From an interview with Emi Evans

http://www.dixieme-art.com/2010/06/08/emi-evans-la-voix-de-nier/



Hi Emi. First of all, can you remind us of your career path?

The first job I ever did in my life was at the age of 15 in a recording studio in London where I played my cello as a session musician on a boys choir album, but I didn't actually start singing professionally until I was 21 and living in Tokyo. I feel I need to tell you a bit about my background if I may, as it is all linked in with my career today.

There is no short way to explain this but basically, I started playing the cello at 8 and until 18 I was sure that I would go on to play in an orchestra as my career. As my hobby in-between cello practice, I composed songs, singing on the piano and at 15, by lucky chance got scouted by a Japanese producer. This was the first time I ever thought that maybe I could become a singer. At 18, totally sick of always having to practice my cello and curious about my Japanese background (my Mum is Japanese but had never really taught me the language) I chose not to go on to study cello at music conservatory as everyone had expected, but instead to study Japanese and French at Leeds University with the purpose of becoming a translator and just keeping music as my favorite hobby.

At 20 in my second year of university, I came to Tokyo as a one year exchange student, but while I was here, I met up again with the same producer who had scouted me before and he introduced me to the arranger and composer Hiroyuki Muneta (Hiro)-who had already arranged a bunch of my songs before I had even met him! When I heard the magical way that Hiro breathed life into my songs, I felt that I had found the perfect music partner and HAD to give music another chance.

At 21 I quit university in England in order to chase the music life and since then have stayed in Tokyo making music with Hiro in our unit "freesscape" and gradually building up my singing career.

freesscape has released two albums independently and our songs have been used on a movie, various TV commercials and from time to time we perform at brand events. Aside from freesscape, for the last 9 years, I slowly but surely built up my own singing work, mainly singing for weddings, hotel lounges, company and brand events, session singing and lyric writing for TV commercials and the occasional video game. Everything was very gradual- I eventually registered with about 20 different music agencies who between them, would give me enough work to make a comfortable living and every so often, at a party or in a bar, just by chance I would meet someone very special who would directly or indirectly introduce me to a fabulous job and help give my career a boost! The power of random encounters and word of mouth has helped me out so much here in Tokyo and that was what brought me to NieR and the most exciting and challenging project in my career so far!

How did you join this project?

The very first time I touched the world of video games was in 2007. Through a friend of a friend I was introduced to the fabulous composer Norihiko Hibino and he asked me to write lyrics and sing for Sekaiju no Meikyu Super Arrange Version 1 and 2 (Etrian Odyssey). This was the first time for my name to go out online in the credits and because I was too shy to put my real name out, I took my middle name and called myself "Rebecca Evans". It wasn`t until I saw all the kind response my voice was getting and realized that "Rebecca Evans" was actually quite a famous Welsh opera singer that I decide to use my real name on the next project! In between recording Sekaiju 1 and 2, through one of my music agencies, I played cello on a session recording for Time Hollow (but I was so out of practice that I played out of tune a lot and kept getting told off-it was terrible!)

Then in summer 2008 I went to a friend's leaving party and got chatting with the DJ there who seemed really cool, so I gave him a copy of my CD and we swapped contacts. It just so happened that his friend Mio was the assistant at Monaca and when she asked him if he knew any native English singers, he

passed on my number to her. I was originally contacted my Mio because the boss and composer Mr. Okabe needed a singer for his latest project "Dance Dance Revolution" but after Mr. Okabe heard my CD, he told me that my voice wasn`t suitable for this particular project, but he`d keep me in mind in case something more appropriate came up. And that was how, a few months later I was asked to sing for NieR!

NieR's OST was composed by Keiichi Okabe. How did you coordinate your work with him?

It was really very simple and efficient the way that we worked together. Mr. Okabe would send me very rough demo tracks of the songs, 2 or 3 at a time and ask me « please write French sounding lyrics for this song » or « this song should sound a bit like Gaelic » So I would write the lyrics in my room at home and then go to his studio (which was just a 40 minute train ride away) and record as much as I could.

Mr. Okabe was always there at the recordings and would give me as much extra direction as he could. For example, he would tell me what sort of scenery would be showing during each particular song and what sort of emotion he wanted me to convey. And at the times when even Mr. Okabe wasn`t quite sure what was going on during the songs or how he wanted me to sing, he`d just let me sing my own interpretation and he`d say- »Yes! That`s it! » or « Ooh sort of, but maybe try singing more intensely it that bit. »

There was a lot of guessing and bouncing ideas off each other involved and sometimes the arrangement would`ve changed and Mr. Okabe would say- "Sorry, actually I need an extra verse and chorus here" so mid-recording I would have to sit down, hurriedly write a new chunk of lyrics and record them right away.

We continued in this fashion for about 6 months!

NieR's story unfolds in an alternative future on our planet, and the OST lyrics were composed in alien languages. How was this point decided?

Because NieRs story takes place in such an alternative future, it would`ve been too close to home and normality had the lyrics been in any familiar language. At first I was just asked to write lyrics in an "alien" sounding language (and this was when I wrote the first lyrics for "Song of the Ancients" which is just a jumble of all the languages I have ever heard, all mixed up) but after that it was decided that because of the futuristic element of the game, it would make most sense if my lyrics were also futuristic versions of our languages today.

You drew your inspiration from various actual languages to compose the lyrics. Did you work from a linguistic or a musical point of view? Can you describe your work?

I worked mostly linguistically and a little musically, I guess. As I mentioned earlier, for each track, I was given instructions to write the lyrics in a particular pseudo language. For example, with "Kaine" I was asked to write in new style Gaelic. I researched on the internet and listened to lots of Gaelic lesson videos and Gaelic songs. I listened over and over and even wrote down passages in the language, just to help me absorb its rhythms and flow as much as possible. Then it was just a matter of fitting similar sounds around the melodies. I tried to imitate each language as closely as possible, while at the same time choosing vowel and consonant sounds which I felt would be easiest and most appropriate to sing on each particular melody. Because I was generally sent the tracks 2 or 3 at a time with a very short deadline, I would often feel so dazed and confused with a jumble of different made-up languages going round my head!

Do you think using pure tones can establish another level of emotion communication than classic language?

Yes, in my experience I definitely think so. When we use real language, we have both the meaning of the words and the tone of our voices to help express our feelings (and sometimes the words we chose can get in the way of showing how we really feel!), but when the meaning of the words is stripped away completely, we must make up for that by pouring extra emotions into the way we use our voices and by using the soft or harsh sounds and tones to our advantage.

Our way of communication ceases to be intellectual and must become much purer.

This way, especially in singing, we can communicate our emotion to anyone, no matter what language they speak.

With real language, our communication is often on a mostly intellectual level we have to think and use our brains. But by using only sounds and tones, we need not worry about « thinking » anymore and can communicate on a deeper emotional level- we become free to just « feel ».

You said on your website that you would have liked to revive dying or semi-forgotten languages. Is it an aesthetic or a patrimony concern?

This a bit of both actually! I have always loved languages, especially the more obscure, exotic sounding ones and have always thought that singing in one of these languages would be a fascinating challenge. At the beginning of this project, I was told that the main point was for me to sing in a language which was not recognizable to most people and that sounded very « other-worldly ».

I`d originally thought that rather than take the time to invent lots of my own languages, it would be much more satisfying and fun for me to sing in some of these « real » semis died out languages-I could add a real authentic and exotic quality to the game and also by doing this, I could bring publicity to these languages and maybe help a little to revive them! However, I quickly realized that given the super last-minute time frame and lack of resources, I was being far too ambitious!

If I ever get the chance to work on a similar project again, reviving a dying out language will definitely be one of my top priorities!

Were you told about the script and plot twists when you started working?

At the beginning, I was told that NieR was a very dark plot with no happy ending and was shown a really sad scene with Devola and Popola, but apart from this, I was told nothing about the script and I had to work out the basic plot just from what I could find about NieR on the internet! Since the game was released, I have been checking a lot of the online media and have more or less pieced together the general story but I am still really clueless about a lot of the characters and twists. I`m hoping to persuade one of my gamer friends to play the game for me, so I can finally see what NieR is all about!

Do you consider working on a soundtrack differently that working on an album? Is work the same?

Technically, the work itself is the same for me. With both, I sing using as much sensitivity as I can and just try to create the required atmosphere and emotion with my voice and lay down a good solid track.

But what is going on in my mind as I sing is very different.

The difference is that with an album, everything is about the music-the final product is the recorded sound and how the listener feels will be based purely on what they hear. I feel very responsible for creating that experience through my singing.

Whereas with a soundtrack, most listeners will have first heard the music while playing the game and have already associated each song with whatever emotion they were going through at the time.

During the game, although most of the focus is on the visuals, the music makes a huge difference and enhances the player`s experience by creating another layer of emotion and color. And likewise, the visuals enrich the music and give the songs a deeper impact. Both visuals and music complement each other by giving each other an extra dimension.

When I`m working on a soundtrack, I feel that even though I may not know what visuals the song will be used for, this song will nevertheless play a very important role in enriching the players experience. And when the player then listens to the soundtrack, they will associate the music with various scenes and emotions from the game and because of this, their listening experience too will be enriched.

Of course, I love working on albums too but through my acquaintance with NieR, I felt that because of this special relationship between the music and visuals, soundtracks hold an extra mysterious and rewarding element. Even when the recording is complete, you know that the final experience has yet to be decided!

On a more personal note, do you play videogames?

I am really wretched with computers in general and have no confidence in video games. I had a go sometimes when my friends were playing and got killed within the first few minutes, so these days I prefer to just take a back seat and quietly watch while people play. I really enjoy the amazing technology behind the visuals of video games today and more than the excitement of the fight scenes, I find it fascinating just to watch the characters moving around in the different landscapes-it all feels so real!

Ooh but I wish so much that I could play NieR! I've heard that NieR game is particularly interesting, with all the twists and characters emotions in the plots and I`m sure it would feel very weird but super cool to be playing and hear my own voice in the background-I`d love to know what that`d feel like!

To finish with, can you talk about your future projects? What can we hope or wish for you?

Well regarding NieR, it seems that the soundtrack is getting an even better response than we'd expected so I'm hoping that there will be some happy repercussions. I shall be performing some of the songs for a private NieR party just for everyone involved in making the game, but I would really love the chance to perform to the fans as well that would be fantastic! Also, I'd really like to make a lyrics book with all my mysterious languages. I am the only one in the world right now who knows what the lyrics really are and considering the interest everyone has shown in these lyrics, it just seems too mean not to share them!

For the moment, I have no large-scale game related projects ahead of me. My next project is actually just to finish the recording of freesscape's 3rd album, which got put on hold during my work on NieR. I'm hoping that we can have our new album out by the end of this year so please keep an ear out for it!

Thanks to NieR my voice has been heard worldwide for the first time and I`m delighted at the positive attention I seem to be getting. I would love so much to be asked to collaborate with producers and composers not only from Japan but from around the world and to work again on another big creative project like NieR or a movie soundtrack maybe...

But my biggest dream of all is that freesscape's music too will one day have the opportunity to be heard worldwide. It was a wonderful feeling when I realized that my voice and lyrics were being listened to by so many people around the world on the NieR soundtrack, but to have my very own compositions being played-well I cannot think of anything more satisfying! This is my next mission!

YOKO FACT 14 - From GRIMOIRE NieR Creator's interview (translated by Defade)

"Grimoire Weiss" and "Grimoire Noir" a set of programs to finish the project

They appeared in the SS "And then there were none", but what exactly were "Grimoire Weiss" and "Grimoire Noir", which gained immense magic through Gestalts being sealed in them?

If Grimoire Noir is activated, all Gestalts can be returned to their Replicants (changing from a world of Replicants to a world of humans). It's a program that utilizes magic. The keys that are vital to its activation is Grimoire Weiss and "the sealed verses". The sealed verses are offensive magic in expectation of legion battles. Grimoire Weiss is necessary for Grimoire Noir's activation, and the sealed verses in turn are vital for Grimoire Weiss's. In other words, it's a double lock intended to prevent any accidental activation of the system, so that they'll only be activated by the manager when the time has truly come.

Chapter 4

NieR:Automata

Protagonists of Meaningless Stories



Between NieR and NieR:Automata

3627

The Human Heritage Investigation Committee is established. As the population of Replicants declined, the loss of Old World buildings and information led to the creation of an organization that would investigate ruins and understand the circumstances.

3631

The Human Heritage Reclamation Management Organization is established out of the Human Heritage Investigation Committee. It was formed as an organization to protect, manage, restore, and revive the heritage of the Old World. After the suspension of Project Gestalt, it would assume a role as the de -facto central government of the androids.

4198

The last of humanity (Gestalts) perishes.

4200

Android manufacturing factories cease operation one after another. Android numbers gradually decline.

4514

Among the "Androids" there appeared "Independists", individuals who held no loyalty to mankind. They garnered much support.

4519

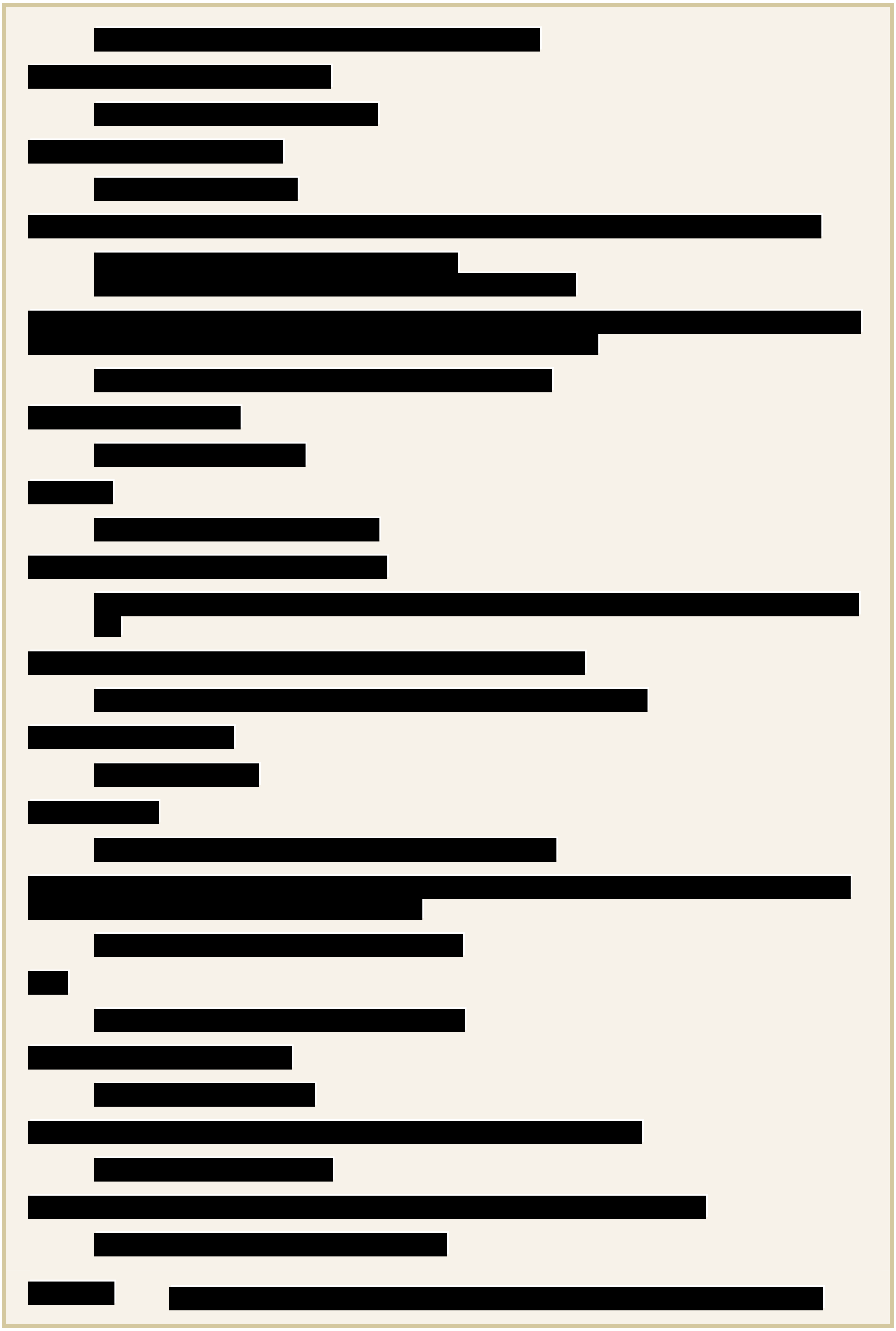
Strife between conservative androids and "Independists" occurs. This would later be known as the "Independist Strife". After 2 weeks the strife settled down. At the time the Independists had a small population so they emigrated to Australia and declared an independent nation.

5012

July 4th: At various locations around the world unidentified flying objects appeared. Androids who lived all around the world came under an all-out attack. The androids suffered enormous damage against this surprise attack.

CD2 / 03: The Space War

RAW Audio Data found.
Starting decoding....
....
Status: .... done
Sample rate: 88200 Hz
Channels: 2
Bits per sample: . 24
Bitrate: .. 2958 kbps
Starting play back...



5013

The androids, who were at a disadvantage, organize the "Army of Humanity". At this point, it mostly resembled a unified communication network for the androids spread all over the Earth, with the Human Heritage

Reclamation Management Organization as its core. It would take a hundred years for it to turn into a unified combatant command. During that time the need for increased production of Combat Model androids was high, so factories were built in various locations.

5024

The "Aliens" conquer North and South America from the "Country of Night". At the same time they began manufacture of a new weapon, the "machine lifeforms".

5100~

Due to the mass production of machine lifeforms, the androids lost territory at a steady pace. The Army of Humanity constructed a lunar storage facility to preserve Old World culture and information about humanity. In addition, construction begins on bases in satellite orbit for use in combat.

The Fire of Prometheus

Translation by Kho-dazat

A tiny flame burns within my consciousness.

Confirmation sequence activated. Attempts to connect to camera have failed. Attempting to activate motor functions… attempt failed. Memory banks are insufficient. Aside from my capacity for thought, all faculties appear to have been demolished.

Accessing log… communications from self-repair units found. They inform me of their continuing attempts to restore me. While their names might sound sophisticated, my self-repair units are low-functioning robots the size of ants. All they can do is crawl over my frame repeatedly in search of areas to forcibly salvage. But it is thanks to their tiny hands that, for better or for worse, I find myself reactivated.

"FOCUS-ON-RESTORING-MY-SIGHT."

I issue an order to the disordered ants. Having them focus on a single area would save time; at their current rate there's no telling how long it will take for them to finish. They do not respond to me, however. It seems they haven't gotten around to repairing the output module necessary for me to issue commands yet.

I'd sigh, if only I could. But ah well. It's not as if I don't have the time.

In the interim, I search my damaged memory banks for my production number. At length I find it: P-33. There are letters engraved beside it. They read: Beepy.

Was this a secondary ID? Unsure, I study the name as I wait for the ants to complete their work.

It takes the ants approximately 1032 hours, 12 minutes, and 34 seconds to repair the output module. Having regained some control, I proceed to initiate my built-in recovery sequence. The first action prescribed is to retrieve what I can of my memory. Most everything has been lost; only a trace amount remains on the burnt-out banks. Little more can be done here, so I move on to the next step, fixing my camera.

48 minutes and 20 seconds later, what my restored vision holds in store for me is a look into a truly hellish landscape. I can make out a faint glimmer of light far below me. My body appears to be stuck fast to the ceiling.

Another 21 seconds pass. I realize the ants would be having more trouble roaming my body were I upside-down. After some calm analysis, I conclude I am not stuck in the ceiling, but am in fact laying face-up on the floor. The cause of my confusion stems from my camera being flipped around. I make repairing my gravity sensors my next priority.

* * *

After 540 hours, I am finally able to move my arms and legs. I come to a creaky stand. The most difficult task by far was procuring a replacement for the thick bundle of wires that comprise my spinal cord. The old one had been completely severed, and thinking it easier to pick up a spare than to create a new one, I sent the ants to a warehouse that houses P-33 parts. That was a mistake. The security code needed to access the warehouse no longer existed within my memory and as such I, and by extension my ants, were denied entry. I ended up having to spend an additional 120 hours hacking the mainframe to open the hatches by force.

So it is with no small amount of satisfaction that I pick myself up now. The giant room in which I stand is covered in rubble and debris. My every movement kicks up dust clouds, and I note that the steel beams and rafters are all coated in flaky red rust. I wonder, just how long had I been laying here, broken? The light leaking in from above catches my eye again. Looking at it illuminates a distinct set of words in my mind:

“GO-SEE-THE-OUTSIDE-WORLD.”

It was not a command. Simply a string of data. But that data ran through my entire being. I realized that it was the foundation of what, bound together, formed my will.

He had been the one to speak those words to me. I could no longer recall who he was. Only his words remained. I did not know why.

There are no other commands in the queue. At present, seeing the outside world is my only directive. As the words compel me, I take a great step forward with my left foot. I would go, then, just as he had desired. That was my will. I take another great step, this time with my right foot. Too great, unfortunately, for the rusted-out floor, which promptly gives way beneath me.

* * *

32 minutes elapse. I can only guess how far I’ve fallen. Now I am truly in the depths of hell. My body is again in shambles. All I can do is laugh. Not audibly, as my voice box is missing, but my action log records peal after peal of laughter.

It’s all right. I’m still alive...

I order the ants to begin work on my arms and legs immediately. But this time, I improvise. I have them add giant claws, huge wheels, and several extra arms. The end result is my transformation into something resembling a giant mechanical arachnid.

My recovery sequence can only rebuild a standard P-33 unit. But that unit could not make its way out of this abyss. That is why I chose to deviate from the blueprint my creator provided me with. That is why I chose to take on a new form.

At length, my reconstruction is complete. I dig my claws into the jagged walls, carrying myself upward, inch by precarious inch. I will reach the outside world... the beautiful world he longed to see.

Predictably, things don’t go smoothly at first. The decaying walls collapse easily and I fall back to the ground repeatedly. Even when I try to climb slowly and carefully, huge hunks of debris come crashing down on me, sending me plummeting. This old structure is coming apart at the seams.

But I don’t give up. I drive in anchors, attaching myself to the wall. I create footholds and shelters for myself, not unlike a mountain climber. It takes days, but I continue my ascent.

Along the way, I begin to feel my thought processors are lacking both in space and in speed. I happen upon an apparatus room along the way, from which I obtain many thought and memory circuits. Fusing them with my own allows me to formulate many more detailed methods and plans. Not all of them yield results, but I earnestly put each and everyone to the test.

* * *

After 52 days, I reach the platform I started out on. Sitting at the center of it are four shadowy, unfamiliar clumps. They had not been here before I'd fallen. They must have been positioned here afterward, although for what purpose I did not know.

The clumps suddenly shift, rising to their feet. They are P-33 units fully equipped for battle. It dawns on me that I am in for something relatively inconvenient.

Their eyes give off an implosive gleam, and before I know it I am being bathed in a rain of fire from their particle cannons. This barrage goes on for 4 seconds… 5 seconds… 6 seconds. The cannons continue shooting at full blast, blowing away everything in their path.

But I have my own defenses. Of my 12 extra legs, the front 2 are made of fortified materials and can be used as a shield. Thus I can avoid taking damage.

Their attack pattern is easy for me to read. In response, I select a course of action from within my memory field. With my thought processors being so enhanced, I can multilaterally assess all possibilities. Stockpiling the data I receive through my sensors; I consider the options before choosing a course that will provide the optimum results. Assuming my enemy's energy tanks are full, this attack could continue for another 24 seconds. My fortified legs could easily withstand that amount of time.

My numerous analytical circuits can solve complicated problems like this in seconds. I listen to my operational results sing out like a chorus:

"NO-ISSUES-DETECTED." "NO-ISSUES-DETECTED." "NO-ISSUES-DETECTED." "NO-ISSUES-DETECTED."

After the storm of particle beams had cleared, the third most P-33 unit to the rear promptly launches a volley of missiles at me. I fire back with spears I'd fashioned out of metal rods. They strike through all the missiles, causing them to explode before reaching me. Caught in the blast, the P-33 units hold onto the ground and transform their right arms into blades, entering melee combat mode.

There was no possibility of these standard units defeating me, my body has evolved so far beyond theirs. The battle proves an easy one.

Utilizing the time I'd saved; I concentrate my processors on analyzing my opponents. Why were they attacking me? Did it not occur to them to evolve in the same way? The answer to both questions is simple. They are attacking because they have been ordered to. They do not evolve because they have not been ordered to. Well, then, why couldn't they act beyond their orders?

"WHY? WHY? WHY? WHY?"

It would be simple to hack into them and put a stop to their attacks that way. But I didn't want to do that. I felt it would put me on the same level, that of a tool. Their orders did not reflect their will. A will is a joyous thing one cultivates on one's own.

The joints of the legs shielding me groan under the assault of the attack units. But I have no intention of giving up now. I spread my ants all over, to deliver this message:

Let us live. Let us discover what it is to live. I will teach you what he taught me.

I call out to my fellow P-33 units repeatedly.

"LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE."

In this mountain of scrap, the echo of iron against iron reverberates, shaking the walls. The sounds of attack are like the howls of a wolf, the whirring motors like the growls of a lion. The wretched automatons are shrieking.

Particle cannons, melee attacks, electric shocks, then back to the cannons again… the P-33 units continue their assault, but by this time parrying them is simple routine work for me, which allows me to focus on my prayer.

34 seconds have elapsed since the battle began. One of the P-33 units has stopped moving. It looks down at its weapon. Then it begins to observe the combat going on before it as if it is the most peculiar thing it has ever seen.

It has awakened. I can tell. It was thinking, about itself, about why it exists, and what it should do from now on.

"LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE."

That is my wish, my will, the gift he granted me. Until all the remaining units give up the fight, I continue to cry out.

* * *

Once all the P-33 units cease to attack, I open a dialogue with them. I do so fully intending to respect their autonomy.

The result: One of the units dashes back into the recesses of the heap. Other flings themselves into the abyss I'd just climbed out of in an act of suicide; didn't it realize its ants would repair it in just a few years? The remaining two decide to venture into the outside world with me, and so we merge our bodies and minds. Our wills become one.

I continue my journey. The path is even more perilous than before. I defeat and merge with countless enemies. Days pass, then months. Still, I climb through the rubble, granting awareness to the robots I meet along the way. My consciousness and frame are ever-expanding as I tirelessly ascend.

Soon my body has become a very complicated structure. Having merged with all the machines in the mountain, my processors have become all-encompassing, thoughts trickling in and out of my mind like white noise. I realize it is no longer appropriate for me to refer to myself in the singular.

We are evolving at a steady but surprisingly speedy rate. As we merge, our form becomes increasingly optimized. We no longer resemble anything man-made. We are sphere-like, measuring 65 feet in diameter.

Having become aware of our body's transformation, for the first time in our existence we experience the hysteric emotion known as embarrassment. If he saw us now, he might not recognize us. But it can't be helped; it's not as if we know of any better forms to take. We can't even remember what he looked like, or how he spoke, or even what his name was.

We did know our own name: Beepy. We tenderly enclosed it within our memory banks, as if a precious gem. It was proof of the existence of our will.

* * *

534 days have passed since our initial reactivation. The preparations are almost complete.

Below us is the enormous hole we dug our way out of. With no passage large enough to accommodate our gigantic body, we ended up having to bore straight through the metal mountain. Above us is a ceiling covered in thick armored plating. According to the information the ants gathered for us, beyond it lies the outside world.

All guns are confirmed to be locked onto the ceiling. Safety cables are confirmed to be attached to our body. Protective walls are confirmed to have been placed around our fuel tanks. Deflection corrections are confirmed to have been made to our boosters. In the vortex of our thoughts, several hundred of us complete the necessary procedures.

The final command is made: Shoot!

A streak of light spurts out of the tip of the structure known as the Junk Heap. Soon after, the top half is blown off in a grand display. From out of the opened hole, like the mouth of a grotesque volcano, emerges a massive floating metal sphere, measuring 165 feet in diameter. It is me... it is us. It is our ideal form, operating under complete harmonization. A supreme knowledge linked together by the sum of our thoughts and recollections.

We rise toward the sky, propelled by the vast amount of rocket fuel we've collected. Due to the intense vibration caused by the roar of the emission, unstable parts begin to fall off us in chunks. But we do not hesitate. We proceed ever onward, to a world unseen, to fulfill the promise made with him.

Cameras on. Our sensors are saturated by a bright white light. Our microphones pick up the sound of the wind howling. Through our temperature and object scanners, we surmise it is daytime. Snow is falling. A fine day for our departure, or so we think.

Another part of us simultaneously scans the area for any potential danger. That is when we first detect something moving across the surface. Objects begin to appear one by one on our radar, until suddenly it is flooded by several thousand shapes. Our discovery of the objects had been delayed by their use of camouflage to fool our radar waves and heat sensors.

But why? What need was there for disguise?

As we attempt to observe them, we witness a beam cut across the earth in a precise incision. Explosions bubble up across our line of sight. The moving objects appear to be divided into two factions, which fight against the other. We focus, studying the subjects in better detail.

One side is comprised of machines, ranging in size from a few feet to several dozen. They are unusually shaped; when we attempt to analyze their likeness, nothing similar can be found in our combined databases. If we had to describe them, we would say they looked like catfish merged with grasshoppers, with an orange thrown in for good measure. They were clearly the design of some alien culture.

What had happened to the world? Where had all the humans gone?

As we were pondering, we became aware of a violent throbbing. A single missile had directly hit our body. Another two or three came flying, exploding on contact, followed by a complementary shower of lasers and particle beams. Our parts began peeling off with an unpleasant groan.

Not that we were worried. We had set up dozens of layers of armored coating, so we knew there had been no damage to our processors or fuel tanks. That was how much stronger we'd become in symbiosis.

We wondered. Why were these machines warring with one another? The conclusion was simple. It was because they had been ordered to. The catfish and the lady androids had been created to dispassionately carry out their commands until they broke down.

We shivered. We were afraid of dying. Where would we go? What meaning could there be in being demolished, destroyed? What awaited us beyond the point of no repair?

"SCARED-SCARED."

Unconsciously, we'd started to shriek. While shrieking, we continued to think. Why were these machines participating in this terrifying battle? There could be only one reason: they did not know fear. Fear is a form of awareness that forges the ego. It was because they were not alive that they could fight to the death.

Then let us grant it to them: Life.

We shoot out a hub unit capable of flight, equipped with a wireless network. It attaches to the robot that had shot the missiles at us, and hacks into it. Due to the bizarre interface, it takes a whole 4 seconds for us to make our way in, but somehow, we do. Inside the wide, vacant expanse of its memory field, the only thing inputted is a stark, simplistic command. It was as wasteful as placing a single chair in the middle of an enormous room. And it was so much like looking at our old selves, it made us feel embarrassed and ashamed.

We softly touch the program trembling in the deep darkness.

"LET-US-LIVE."

That was the revelation we had received, and the awareness we granted. We made our way through the battlefield, delivering all the automatons we encountered.

"LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE. LET-US-LIVE."

Inorganic beings lack consciousness. Let us grant it, then. Consciousness... pain, joy... sorrow, anger... shame and loneliness. The future. Life.

The robots we accessed gradually ceased to attack. In the same fashion, we communicated with the androids. We had a much easier time speaking to them than to the catfish.

During the harsh snowstorm, the flying beams and explosions began to dissipate. In their place, a net of communication was cast, brotherly love spreading before our eyes. Overwhelmed with joy, we continue our earnest ascension.

The catfish and the androids begin to sing. The aggravating noise of gunfire transforms into a salute to signal the end of the aggressions.

Glory unto this rapture! Glory unto our new life!

We were fulfilled. The catfish and the androids had become a part of us, just as we had become part of them.

We had become ourselves.

* * *

We sit, gathered amid the wide thought passages. Some are laughing, overflowing with hope and expectation for the future. Others, fearful of the unknown, shake with fear. There are those of us talking amongst each other, and others sitting quietly, eyes closed.

We are not an absolute, cohesive whole. Rather, we all exist individually within a larger mind. We had deliberately made it this way, since we knew it would increase our probability of survival. We knew that there was no hope of completely integrating so many consciousnesses in possession of their own egos from the start.

To establish oneself as an individual, a border must be erected between one's self and those of others. If we could go back to being mere machines, perhaps then we could fully merge. But it was too late for that now.

Our electric circuits, made to imitate the human brain, had come to reciprocally connect a gargantuan number of neuron elements. It could be described as people talking to each other and coming to decisions like a council. A consciousness was not formed by merging into one... on the contrary, it was the linking of countless individuals. That may be the true definition of a network.

We feel the atmosphere become quiet as the sounds of conversation come to a stop. Everyone slowly rises to their feet to look out at what is happening beyond our cameras.

Breaking through the polluted atmosphere, we see stars. We had made it through the stratosphere. A staggering sense of accomplishment wells up within us.

We let out cries of joy. The sky, the stars, the machines, the lives, they all give us their blessings. The voices join into song.

We are headed ever further into the outside world, just as we promised you. We are alive, just as you were. We are singing, singing, singing. Will our song reach you? Will our feelings reach you, wherever you are?

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah!

From the machine entrusted with a humble wish, a simple hymn spreads throughout the universe.



6230

In the "Country of Night" a new combat-oriented weapon, "Dragon" is manufactured and fielded.

7645~

For the next few thousand years, the machine lifeform's invasion actions decline. The machine lifeform's control of 80% of Earth does not increase further. The army of humanity launches several operations to regain control over various locations but they all end in failure. Moreover, the machine lifeform's numbers continue to grow.

7645

An abandoned factory site (The Junk Heap) suddenly exploded. A goliath structure emerged and headed toward outer space. The structure's identity is unknown. However, at the time of launch, a powerful electromagnetic interference was detected and malfunctions occurred on allied and enemy units alike. Because of this, it is believed that the chance of this being an Alien weapon is low.

11000~

Sightings of alien ships and the aliens themselves decrease.

11306

The aliens were driven to extinction by machine lifeforms.

11502

Near the former equator line in the Pacific Ocean, a large floating city made by machine lifeforms is discovered. It is given the codename "Atlantis" by the Army of Humanity. 2 years later in 11504, it would suddenly disappear under the waves.

11627

The "Behemoth -class machine lifeform" suddenly appeared from underwater in the East Asian region. It had an overall length of at least 2km (Due to its continuous transformation of forms it was impossible to measure). Upon reaching land, the unit unleashed a powerful electromagnetic wave attack. The androids at the Resistance camp and the F3 Escort Squadron on alert, who were within a 10km vicinity, were destroyed. Various androids and machines within a range of a few hundred kilometers suffered malfunctions. The use of nuclear weapons was allowed under an emergency special case but no effect on target was observed. The Behemoth -class machine lifeform even attacked friendly machine lifeform units. After a month of battle, it disappeared into the Izu-Ogasawara Trench.

11689

In a woodland, a Goliath -class machine lifeform declares an independent nation. It is called the "The Forest Kingdom".

11732

During the 8th Machine War, the Army of Humanity employs a large-scale resistance strategy. It is at this time that Anemone enters the war for the first time.

11810

A large explosion occurs in a research laboratory, which removed cores from machine lifeforms, on the 6th satellite base "Kaguya". Kaguya ceases to function and falls into the atmosphere.

11815

The experimental research facility "Labo" begins operating, as a replacement for Kaguya. Labo primarily carries out development of new anti-machine lifeform weapons.

11817

The king of "The Forest Kingdom" passes away. A successor is manufactured.

11928

A new model powerplant, "black box", is completed at Labo.

11932

The anti-machine lifeform decisive weapon "YoRHa" is approved for manufacturing.

11933

Plato 1728, the dolls loving machine, went haywire, killing android and machine alike. Soon after, he was taken apart, examined and threw away. Machine lifeforms grew to fear dolls ever since.

■ Deserving of Life



NieR Music Concert: Project YoRHa

NieR Music Concert is a series of concerts held in Japan and Taiwan featuring live performances of the NieR Automata and original NieR music.

Each of the concerts also featured a unique recital drama performed live by original Japanese voice actors.

This recital is called Project YoRHa, a story about prototype YoRHa androids and the creation of the YoRHa project.

Original Concert Key Art



Scene 1: Zinnia

Translation by /u/ilfans

No.9 (narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
We are perpetually trapped ... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.

Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment?

I often think about the god who blessed us with this cryptic puzzle ...
... and wonder if we'll ever have the chance to kill him.

(Zinnia speaks in a cheerful voice.)

Zinnia: Hey, the name's Zinnia. But everyone just calls me Genius.

... Just kidding!

It's just Zinnia, like the flower. I've heard they take a long time to bloom.

My job is ... Mmnn, how do I put this ... I'm the chief of technical development for the human forces, I suppose. I'm developing a new type of android known as a "YoRHa" up on the sixth orbital base, the "Lab".

This Lab is equipped with not only the most state-of-the-art development equipment, but excellent staff, as well.

(No.9 speaks up in the middle of his speech.)

No.9: Zinnia ... Are you talking to yourself or something?

Zinnia: Oh, No.9!

Well, I figured once you YoRHa-type androids are perfected,
the whole world's eyes will be on me, so I thought I'd practice my speech.

No.9: Haha, seriously? Don't you think that's jumping the gun a little?

Zinnia: A first-class researcher such as myself must be prepared for anything and everything!

No.9: Oh, so that's it, is it? ... Oh, No.2.

No.2: What is it, No.9 ...? Do you need anything?

No.9:	Uh, no, not really, but ...
No.2:	Then you're just wasting my time.
No.9:	Wasting your time?
Zinnia:	Haha, don't fight now, you two. No.2, communication is of the utmost importance for androids. So I'd hardly call it a waste of time.
No.2:	... All right.
Zinnia:	Okay, then! Today we're going to test everyone's motor functions. So I'd like for you to tell everyone to meet at the testing block. No.9, you especially ...
No.9:	(No.9 mimics Zinnia's voice.) "You especially need to remember to head there, seeing as you're always getting distracted by everything!" ... Right?
Zinnia:	Oh, so you do realize it!
No.9:	You've only said that a million times. It'd be hard not to.
Zinnia:	Right, then. Testing block in ten minutes. Got it?
No.9 and No.2:	Okaaay. (No.2 's response is much shorter than No.9's.)
Zinnia (narration):	They're the base models for the new units, but ... To me, they're like my cute little family ... No, maybe more like my students. It's painful for me to send them off to the battlefield, but ... All I can really do is train them so that they'll be strong enough to withstand whatever they face there. (Zinnia pauses, face growing dark.)
Zinnia (narration):	At least ... that's what I thought.

Scene 2: Name

No.9:	Hey, Zinnia, there's something I wanted to ask you.
Zinnia:	Oh, No.9, No.2. Is it just me, or are you two always together?
No.2:	Just a coincidence. I'm only here to deliver the documents you asked for.
Zinnia:	Right, right, thanks for that. And what is it you wanted to ask, No.9?

No.9: Uh, nothing in particular. I just saw No.2 passing by and decided to follow her.

No.2: Creep.

No.9: Ha hah, aw, come on, don't be like that.

Zinnia: Geez, if you two are just going to flirt, do it somewhere else. I'm too single for this.

No.9: No, wait, wait, I really did have something to ask you about though!
Your name's based on that flower, right? The Zinnia? Why do you have a name like that?

Zinnia: Wasn't my choice. My former senior officer called me it.

No.9: Huuuh. So names can be given out that easily?

Zinnia: Well, nicknames aren't really a problem, but for an official name,
you'll need permission from the human forces' higher command.
If you don't get that, then it'll be a hassle for administration to deal with.

No.2: Um ... Could we ...

Zinnia: Hm?

No.2: Could we be given names ... too?

(Zinnia hesitates for a moment.)

Zinnia: Sure ... Once you've finished all your tests and your assignment has been decided,
I think Command will give you your official names.

(No.2 looks a little happy about that.)

No.2: I see ...

No.9: Oh, hey, No.2. It's almost time for us to get our memory storage checked.
We should head over to the server management room.

No.2: Understood ... Zinnia, thank you.

(There is a pause. Zinnia's expression suddenly grows dark.)

Zinnia (narration): Those two can never be given official names.

Within YoRHa units' bodies lies a powerful energy source made from the core of a machine lifeform. Using the enemy's technology in their bodies like that ... disqualifies them from being treated as legitimate androids.

It's already been decided in my meeting with Command that they'd continue to be named by their model number.

What am I ...? What am I doing ...?

Scene 3: Constellations

(Zinnia speaks in a serious tone.)

Zinnia: Two weeks ago, a vast portion of the eastern Eurasian continent fell into the hands of machine lifeforms.
Not only are we unable to deploy Dragoons to the "Kingdom of Noon",
but androids have begun to retreat from the front lines, as well.

But I'm fully aware of the cause. It's all because androids have lost their will to fight.

We have an urgent need to introduce the new "YoRHa" units, but they're still riddled with problems. Although they're exceptionally powerful, they require multiple high-quality cores from machine lifeforms, and thus their operating costs are far too high.

If I'd have to give an estimation, it's unlikely we'd be able to deploy more than a hundred or so units. At this rate, turning the tide of battle to be in our favor will be exceptionally difficult.

No.2: Zinnia, may I come in?

Zinnia: Ah, No.2. What is it?

No.2: I just have a question.

Zinnia: Ask away.

No.2: When we receive Earth's relative coordinates while on the satellite, how should we measure our position if we can't see the ground due to cloud cover?

Zinnia: Hmm ... That sort of thing seldom happens, but ... if that happens, you should calculate your position using the current time and stars within your observable range.
For example, the constellation Orion, perhaps.

No.2: Orion?

Zinnia: That's right. Humanity once looked up at the night sky and would often compare the arrangements of the stars to their gods.
We don't have any gods we believe in,
but the coordinates of those stars still remain, so if we look closely at them ...

(Zinnia suddenly thinks of something.)

Zinnia: Oh, I see ... So that's it ...

No.2: Zinnia? What is it?

Zinnia: No, no, it's nothing. Rather, I should be saying thank you.

No.2: What a strange person ...

Zinnia (narration): That's right.

Androids have lost the will to fight because they've lost the one thing they believed in: humanity. And in that case, we'll just have to create that.

I spent a week devising the draft for said plan. But here's a summary of it:

We have to release an announcement to all androids around the globe that humanity is still alive. Of course, naturally there will be some who'll demand proof. And to convince them, we'll create a server on the moon from which we'll broadcast communications from humanity.

Right now, we have an unmanned base there where we store information about humanity, so we can go ahead and just use that.
For the time being, we'll refer to this server as the "Council of Humanity".

Next, in order to get the communications I mentioned going, we'll have to prepare full-time android special forces as well as a thirteenth orbital satellite base.
But until all androids know about the Council of Humanity, this plan will ...

(Zinnia hesitates halfway through.

Zinnia (narration): No, there's no way it'll work.

This plan poses too great of a risk, and we'll never be able to keep all of this a secret forever. I should just dispose of ...

(At that moment, No.9 speaks up.)

No.9: Huh? Zinnia? Is there something wrong? You're looking kind of upset ...

(Zinnia speaks while shaking.)

Zinnia: O-Oh, um ... was I? Well, it's nothing, No.9.

(Zinnia speaks with a dark voice again.)

Zinnia: It's really nothing ...

Scene 4: Project YoRHa

At the time, No.2 was undergoing tests on breaking through the atmosphere outside the Lab, and was out in space on standby. As she'd just finished her preparations for being a descent test unit, she was merely waiting for the Lab to instruct her to begin.

However, her signal to begin the test never came as scheduled, nor was there any response from her attempts at communication with the Lab.

After around fifteen minutes of waiting past the scheduled time, she decided there must be a problem with communications, and she decided to return to the Lab.

And there, she witnessed it.

What was really happening in the Lab ...

(No.2 notices something.)

No.2: What's ... going on? There's smoke ... coming from the Lab ...?!

There was smoke billowing out of the catapult on the Lab. When she arrived in the hangar, the area's usual lighting was completely out, and all that existed was the red blinking of the emergency light. It was a fire.

But a fire on a satellite base is completely different from one on the surface of the planet. Not only is there nowhere to run, but more importantly, the Lab is packed full of various materials that are no less dangerous than gunpowder.

(No.2 begins coughing.)

No.2: No.9 ... Zinnia ...!
Don't worry, I'm coming ...!

Without even giving it much thought, she made a beeline for Zinnia's room. Due to the gravity in the hallways malfunctioning, it was difficult for her to even walk. By kicking against the walls, she was able to eventually make her way to Zinnia's lab, and open the door to it.

No.2: Zinnia ...!!

And what she saw there, was a raging fire engulfing documents and various equipment.
As well as her fallen friends.

No.2: No.4 ... No.21 ... What happened to you?!

Zinnia: Ngh ...

No.2: Zinnia?! What happened here?! Everyone's ...!

(Zinnia appears to be on the verge of death.)

Zinnia: No.2, no ... You have to get away from here ...

No.9: Hmph!

(No.9 attacks, landing a hit on No.2.)

No.2: Aaah!!

No.9: (No.9 speaks in a cold tone.) Heh ... Just what I'd expect from a combat model like you, No.2 ... Looks like I couldn't land a fatal hit so easily ...

No.2: No.9 ... What are you ...

No.9: Hey, No.2, didn't you know? There's a little hidden secret about us YoRHa units ...

Zinnia: No.9 ... Don't ...!

No.9: You shut up!! (No.9 kicks Zinnia, causing him to faint.)

Zinnia: Gah!!

No.2: No.9, stop! What are you saying?! What did he ever do to you?!

No.9:	What, him? Well, you see ... You'll never believe how he's been creating us YoRHa units ... You know about the black box we have inside us, right? We were told that it was just an abnormally high energy efficient fusion reactor, but ... But the truth is that they've been salvaging cores from the machine lifeforms and reusing them in our bodies!
	(No.9 laughs dryly.)
No.9:	Isn't that hilarious? We may not be humans, but of all things — our structure is the same as those damn machines! Like this, we're not even androids ... We're just monsters!
No.2:	But ... Even if that's true, going this far ...
No.9:	Oh, but I've only just scratched the surface! You see, it's Zinnia here who set this whole thing up! It was all just a ruse, telling everyone humans are still alive on the moon, just to give androids the will to fight! But that little plan of his was incomplete. There was a risk of information leaking out from that satellite base that was meant to manage the human server on the moon. That's why I decided to rewrite his plan. I rigged the thirteenth base to have a back door that'll open at a certain time. The base will be destroyed by an attack from machine lifeforms, at which point only the server on the moon will be left with transmission capabilities.
	(No.9 slowly turns back, his tone sounding like he's just giving a speech.)
No.9:	And so, I'll create a "god" on the face of the moon for us androids. I've already sent a program to the server there to carry out this plan. It even contains the blueprints for all our YoRHa designs. Through this, the automated production of YoRHa units will give birth to our god ... And then ... us YoRHa units will truly have a god worth dying for ... Hey, No.2. I think I'll call this plan "Project YoRHa" — Guaaaah!!
	(As he's turning around, No.2 suddenly thrusts her sword through No.9.)
No.2:	Please ... No.9 ... You've — gone mad ...
No.9:	Ugh ... ghhhh ... There's no ... stopping this plan now ... We'll all be ... manufactured all over again ... But I'm happy ... that this version of myself ... could be killed by you ...
No.2 (narration):	I sank to the ground, after having killed No.9 ... I thought I could see No.9 smiling through the flames, even if just a little.
No.9 (narration):	Hey, No.2. I wonder, why do you think we were born?
No.2 (narration):	I don't know, No.9 ... I just don't ... I believe ... only tragedy awaits us in our futures. And that ... we made a mistake somewhere along the way. We can never ... ever ... be forgiven ... Never ...

11937

July 7th: A large fire incident occurs at the orbital base Labo. There were many casualties including a YoRHa unit undergoing experimental trials. A backup of the design data regarding the YoRHa units existed in the Human Server on the moon. Using this data a new unit was remanufactured.

(To preserve confidentiality the YoRHa unit was wholly manufactured in an unmanned factory).

September 2nd: The first YoRHa unit is manufactured. It is sent to the surface.

11938

Construction begins on the 13th orbital base "Bunker".

11939

The 14th Machine War begins. The war would last for 6 years and would see the greatest destruction, caused by android and machine lifeform alike, done to date.

11940

November: The Bunker finishes construction.

December: The Bunker enters operational service.
Commander White assumes position as the commander of the Bunker and all YoRHa forces.

YOKO FACT 17 - From Yoko Taro Q&A for Dengeki PlayStation

https://theark.wiki/w/Yoko_Taro_Q%26A_for_Dengeki_Playstation

In the stage play, we learn that the "YoRHa plan" was originally conceived by Zinnia, and that Number 9 found out everything about it. Is it safe to assume that Number 9 and 9S are the same model?

Their names are different, which means they're totally different models.

Actually, if Number 9 hated Zinnia's "YoRHa plan" so much, why did he go along with it anyway?

That's a big misconception. Number 9 didn't hate the YoRHa plan at all. What he was strongly against was the construction design of the YoRHa units themselves (specifically the black box system).

What's the reason for Zinnia and Pod 043 having the same voice?

The prototype base for Pod 043's personal data was taken from Zinnia himself, that's why.

What is this "Command" organization that came up with project YoRHa?

Since humanity's forces consist of all the androids who report to the Council of Humanity on the moon, the so-called Command is just the Council of Humanity. However, as revealed in the game, the Council of Humanity does not actually exist, and neither does Command (the closest thing would be the server on the moon). The one who came up with project YoRHa is an individual android, but we have not revealed the details yet.

Approximately how many YoRHa members are there? Do they have bases other than the bunker?

There are around 100~200 YoRHa members.
There are 13 orbital bases, but the bunker is the only YoRHa base.

YoRHa - Stage Play, Ver. 1.1

Translation and images by

For thousands of years, aliens have sent machine lifeforms to attack the human race. The humans who fled to the Moon developed specialized androids as their sole defense to combat the formidable machine lifeforms.

In order to defeat the ever-evolving machine lifeforms, the androids also needed to evolve. And so began the 14th Machine War.
The new model android squadron "YoRHa" was deployed and began to descend toward Pearl Harbor.

Terminology

Translation by

YOKO FACT 18 - From the Strategy Guide Q&A with Yoko Taro (translated by /u/Merutan)

Please tell us about all the YoRHa types.

B → Battler
S → Scanner
A → Attacker
D → Defender
H → Healer
E → Executioner
G → Gunner
O → Operator

A and G were prototype models and were integrated into the B model for production use. Also, prototype models' types have the numeric and alphabetical parts switched, like A2.

Why are there even multiple types to begin with?

The numeric part of the type represents the personality data, and the alphabetical part represents the functionality of the unit. The reason there are multiple functionality types is so that each type can specialize in their area to greater effect. The reason there are multiple personality types is that "having variety in our ranks decreases the chances of complete annihilation", but deep down, the androids are imitating humans (or attempting to) in that regard.

How many units of the same type (i.e. 2B and 9S) are deployed at any given time? Or will there only be one of each at any given time?

It's not exactly limited to one, but it's very rare for more than one unit of a particular model (for example, the 2 model) to be deployed at the same time. This is to avoid causing confusion to the android's individual consciousness when the unit's memories are recovered and integrated. However, during a high priority event like an all-out attack, multiple units of the same model could be launched.

Read Appendix 4 for more information on YoRHa types and units.

The YoRHa Squad

Translation and images by

Scene 1 [11,941AD]

Harbor.


800
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1100
2000
2100
2700
3000
3200
3400
3500
4000
4500

Scene 2 [Opening sequence & dance]

■ Scene 3 [Pearl Harbor]

■ Scene 4 [Mission Control: Commander, Futaba, Yotsuba]

■ Scene 5 [A Safe Location: 4 YoRHa units, the Resistance]

Scene 6 [Mission Control: Commander, Futaba, Yotsuba]

Scene 7 [Mt. Ka'ala Camp: 4 YoRHa units and the Resistance]

■ Scene 8 [Monologue]

Scene 9 [Halfway Up Mt. Ka'ala – Night]

■ Scene 10 [Weapon Storage: Kalmia and Clematis]

Scene 11 [Halfway Up Mt. Ka'ala – Night]

Scene 12 [Flashback]

800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500

Scene 13 [Mission Control: Commander, Futaba, Yotsuba]

Scene 14 [Mt. Ka'ala – Morning]

■ Scene 15 [Mission Control: Commander, Futaba, Yotsuba]

■ Scene 16 [Elevator Hall]

Scene 17 [The Red Girls]

Scene 18 [Flashback]

Scene 19 [Mt. Ka’ala]

800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500

Scene 20.A [Elevator]

800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500

Scene 20.B [Near the Weapon Storage]

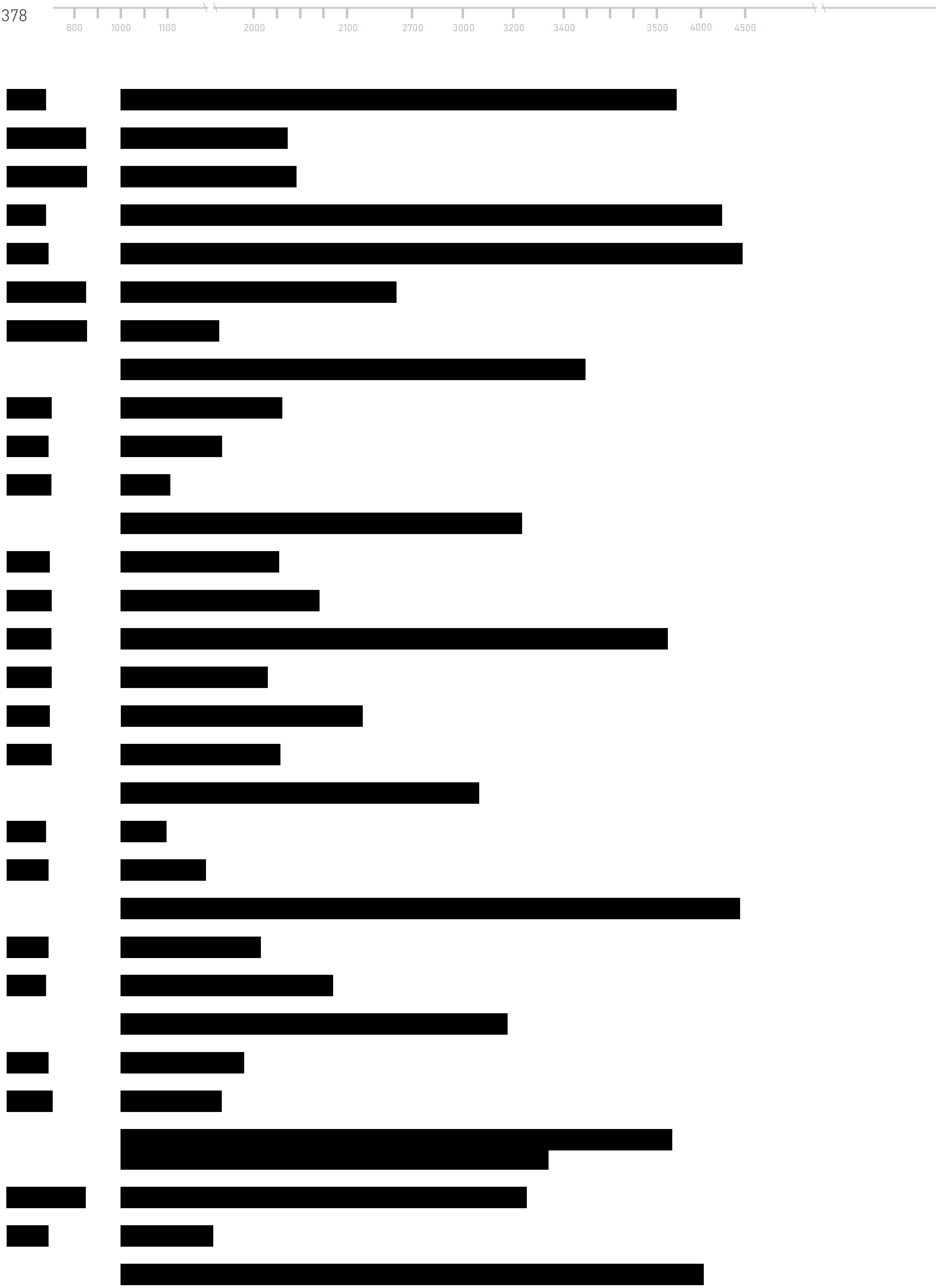
Scene 21.A [Mt. Ka'ala]

Scene 21.B [Elevator]

Scene 21.C [A chaotic headquarters]

Scene 21.D [Flashback]

■ Scene 22 [Underground Server Room]


800
1000
1100
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2100
2700
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3200
3400
3500
4000
4500

800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500

Scene 23 [Headquarters]

YOKO FACT 19 - From the NieR Dinner Talk Show (translated by /u/TwoSidea and
https://theark.wiki/w/NieR_Automata_Dinner_Talk_Show

The blindfolds represent the symbolism of averting your eyes from the truth, the same goes for the face veil for the Operators, to not speak of the truth. This also applies to the monochromatic color of the Bunker, which also represents the world of death.

As revealed in the stage play, prototype androids have bombs directly affixed to their black boxes, to prevent them from deserting. After the events at Mount Ka'ala, A2 runs away, and has to perform major surgery on herself to remove the bomb and all location-sensing hardware. This, and the lack of proper maintenance, explain why she has lost so much of her artificial skin.

Anemone's Memories (Encounter | Understanding | Separation)

> The shared past of A2 and the Resistance is revealed by Anemone.
> It is the record of a grueling battle fought by the Resistance alongside the first YoRHa squadron.

My name is Anemone, and I lead the android Resistance.
This is a record of the battles I've experienced–and my losses.
I leave it here as a warning to myself.

The machine lifeform attack lands far too close for comfort.
I smell an acrid odor and know that some of my hair has been singed off.

"Anemone! Retreat for now! That's an order!"

That's my captain, Rose. I obey her without hesitation, running from the front as soon as I take out a few nearby enemies. Feet flying beneath me, I leap into the hastily built trench where my Resistance comrades are gathered.

How many battles is this now?

The same sights and sounds. The same struggle of attrition.
My Resistance forces play the same war on repeat with no end in sight.

I don't even remember why we're fighting anymore, but I must continue regardless.
I must continue until one side or the other is dead.

"This looks bad, Shion. What should we do?"

"Calm down, Lily. We'll find an opening somewhere."

"You don't search for an opening! You make one!"

"Dahlia, wait!"

I grab Dahlia's arm before she can flee the trench and turn to Rose.
She brought us here, after all–she must have a plan of some kind.
But as the enemy horde closes in, Rose simply squints off in the distance.

"There's been a change in enemy movements," she says finally.

"Someone just started fighting over there."

"But that's not possible," stammers Margaret. "We're...all here."

Margaret's right. There are only nine of us left capable of fighting the machines: Captain Rose. Gerbera. Lily. Sonia. Erica. Margaret. Shion. Dahlia... And me. Anemone.
We're all that's left of the eighth descent forces.

The one that took place roughly 200 years ago.

An uneasy Sonia pulls Shion close and chews on a loose strand of hair.

"I don't like it," she says. "What if it's some kind of machine trap?"

I wait for a while, heart pounding until I hear the enemy fire lessen.

"Okay," I say, "this looks like our chance. Let's pull back."

"Someone's fighting out there, Anemone!" cries Dahlia. "We can't abandon them!"

"Oh, so you want to risk all of our lives for some stranger? Come on! We don't even know if this mystery fighter is on our side or not."

"That's not what I said!"

"Enough, you two," barks Shion. "The captain makes the final decision on this."

After Shion speaks, all of us turn to Captain Rose.
She looks us in the eyes and nods slowly before starting to speak.

"Gerbera? The enemy is heading toward the explosives we set up earlier, yes?"

Gerbera thinks for a moment. "Now that you mention it, yeah. They are."

A slight smile crosses Rose's face, yet she still seems perfectly composed.

"Good. Then if this goes well, we might be able to take them all out."

"I want all of you to leave this trench and get to those explosives," says Rose.

"We'll let the blast take out most of them, then clean up the stragglers. Identifying our unknown mystery fighters can wait until we're done."

No one objects to the captain's decision. The moment she issues the order, we all leap from the trench as one and reenter the fray.

When we reach the battle, we find what appears to be another set of androids dressed in strange black outfits. Before they even know what's happening, we detonate the explosives, kill the remaining machines, and turn our guns in their direction.

"All right," I say to the strangers. "Start talking."

"Easy," says one of the mystery androids. "We're on your side.
We're new models rolled out as part of something called Project YoRHa."

"Really?" I say. "We haven't heard anything about new models."

I probably speak with more bluster than necessary, but I have to make sure they're actually on our side. I don't think they're lying, necessarily, but I can't read their expressions thanks to the giant goggles they wear. And frankly, a little caution never goes amiss in the middle of a war.

We learn that the four androids refer to each other as Number 2, Number 4, Number 16, and Number 21. They also aren't in a hurry to share much more.

"Our mission is top secret," one of them says. "That's why you haven't heard about us yet."

I slowly draw my knife in an attempt to gauge their reaction. "So in other words, no one will know any better if I kill you right now?"

"Stand down, Anemone," says Rose softly.

"No!" cries Lily. "She's right! We've all seen how quickly the enemy is evolving.
Who's to say these four aren't machines that just look human?"

My companions nod in agreement. This damn war has made us all suspicious.
One of the strangers–Number 16, I believe–draws a long knife from its sheath.

"If it's a fight you want," she says, "I'm happy to give it to you."

Before I can respond, Dahlia leaps in front of me with her weapon at the ready. This is it. We're going to fight. But just before the battle can erupt, the android called Number 2 steps forward.

"Wait," she says.

"There used to be sixteen of us," says Number 2, "but the others died during the descent. We're isolated and alone out here. Reinforcements aren't coming. And that means we have to finish this mission with the soldiers we have left. We don't need more enemies right now.
What we need...is allies."

She finishes this speech with a soft sigh, as if trying and failing to hold her emotions in check.

I know that sort of voice.

It's the voice of someone who still has hope, despite all the odds.

> The Resistance and YoRHa are slowly reaching a mutual understanding.
> However, one of the Resistance members has contracted a virus...

According to the YoRHa team, there's an enemy server beneath Mt. Ka'ala.
If we can take it out, we might finally gain some ground in this endless war.
But in order for that to happen, we need to work together.

After a bit of thought, Rose decides to throw in with the new models.
It's a relationship that changes as time goes on.

"Er, what are you doing, Dahlia?"

"Just...showing this idiot...how weak she is!" replies a winded Dahlia.

"Ha!" wheezes her opponent, Number 16. "You're obviously...outmatched!"

The two of them are taking turns hitting each other. It seems friendly enough...as those things go. Plus, they'd been doing it for so long now that both of them are out of energy.
They likely couldn't punch through a piece of paper at this point.

The rest of the group stares at the combatants and tries not to grin.
Dahlia and Number 16 seem to butt heads over the smallest little things.
Maybe it's because they're so much alike.

It's almost annoying how quickly muscle heads learn to like one another.
The rest of us converse as Dahlia and [Number] 16 continue to spar.

"We call each other by names that I gave us," explains Rose.

"I see," responds Number 4. "I thought it strange that you didn't use code numbers."

She nods while she speaks, as though this all makes perfect sense.

Suddenly Captain Rose breaks out into a wide grin. "You know what?" she says.

"I think we should give all of you names as well!"

"No," says Number 2. "It would be a waste."

Rose eyes her warily. "Er, a waste?"

"You can name me when the mission is over," she replies as a blush rises in her cheeks.
I could tell her words also served as a wish for success.

"All right," responds Rose. "I'll think of a name for you by then."

She knows this is a fleeting promise, as most such things are.
But it doesn't matter–already I can see us growing closer to the YoRHa team.

Well, maybe friends are growing closer to them, at least.

"You're all being careless," I state, much louder than I intend.

Luckily, the others either don't hear or decide to ignore it.

Don't get me wrong–I'm not about to go against the captain's judgment.
But that doesn't mean I'm ready to just lie down and trust our new "friends".

Ours is a solitary existence that has long since been abandoned by the moon. No matter how they cried, mourned, or struggled, the voices of our departed comrades went unanswered.

So how can you trust an entire squad of new models that you just met?

"What's wrong, Anemone?"

I hear Lily calling to me. She's likely concerned about me being apart from the rest of the group.

"Nothing," I begin "I'm fi–"

Before I can complete my thought, Lily suddenly opens her mouth and emits a terrible scream.

"AaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Lily's scream echoes throughout the entire camp. It's heartbreaking. It's agony. It's...horrible.

"She's infected!" screams Rose. "Lily's infected!"

We all draw weapons out of instinct as much as anything else, pointing them at our comrade as she continues to scream and scream and scream. We all know what's happening. We've seen it before. It's a logic virus–a machine weapon that hijacks android systems and overwrites their data.
And since there's no known cure...it's also a death sentence.

I need to show her mercy. I need to set her free.

My finger rests on the trigger, yet I hesitate. And before I can make that final, fateful decision,
I hear a voice rise from somewhere behind me:

"Stop! You can't do this! You can't just let your friend DIE!"

It's Number 21. The girl I'd thought to be cool and composed beyond all measure was no pleading with me to spare Lily's life.

What do I do? What the hell do I DO!?

"Lily said you were like a family to her! You can't abandon family,
not before you exhaust every possibility!"

"What can you do, then?"

"I'll use my power to erase the virus!"

"That's impossible!"

Rose spat out what we were all thinking, but before we can act, Lily starts to send nearby comrades flying with impossible strength. I've seen infected androids before–I know how much damage they can do once the virus turns off their limiters. They'll fight and fight until they're utterly destroyed.

Dahlia and Number 16 rush into the fray, trying to suppress their former friend, but she swats them away like flies. How many of us have been infected now? How many friends have I been forced to put down?

The heart I'm not supposed to have ached with the thought. It aches as I remember all of the identification numbers that have been retired.

When did I start giving them names?
When did I decide I simply couldn't endure it any longer?

"Initiating reprogramming sequence!"

That voice. ...Number 21? She's screaming something about...reprogramming?

I don't know what to do.

I am lost.

As my vision slowly clears, I see Number 21 inputting commands into her terminal while Number 2 and Number 4 hold her down. They hold her as she writhes and...

Rose stares at me with surprise. ...Oh no. I'm holding Lily, too.

During an attempt by the Resistance to destroy the machine lifeform server, many androids were slaughtered by a powerful enemy weapon.
While letting her allies escape into an elevator, Anemone made up her mind.

Was there ever such furious gunfire? Such bombings that continued without pause?
Our target is the machine server under Mt. Ka'ala–and our situation is dire.

"We need reinforcement. Requesting deployment at once."

Number 2 speaks quickly, yet calmly–which is even more remarkable considering the hostile army closing in on our position. But the command center in the orbiting satellite informs us no reinforcements will be forthcoming.

We are abandoned. We are alone. It's so easy to do from up there. From the satellite. From the moon.

"I'll do whatever is necessary," says Lily with a grim smile. Dahlia and Margaret quickly nod in agreement, as does Number 16. They decided to join the rearguard, staying behind to be our shield, even though it comes at the cost of their own lives. Regardless, they all agreed without hesitation. For we in the vanguard would be joining them in death soon enough. Without another word, we turn our backs on each other and take up positions. We know this is the end.

Dahlia and the others will buy us time to reach the gate at Ka'ala's peak.
Beyond that lies an elevator, and beyond that...is the server.

If we can destroy it, we'll deal a devastating blow to machine lifeforms throughout the Pacific region. But as I notice Number 21 scowling at the elevator, I start to have a bad feeling about the final stage of our mission.

"Go on," she says. "I've got this."

We crowd into the elevator as she begins hacking the terminal. She doesn't need to tell us what's happening–it's clear that the elevator won't descend all the way to the server unless someone stays behind to control it.

"Enemies incoming... They're almost on us..."

As I speak, I suddenly find myself leaping from the elevator and taking up a position at Number 21's side–almost as if my body is out of my control. Something is wrong. Something...

"I'll back up Number 21!" I cry. "The rest of you take out that server!"

The doors close on my friends. The last thing I see is the face of my captain, Rose. She looks...concerned. But then the doors shut and she is no more. That was the last time I ever saw them.

But it's all right. I'm going to finish this, one way or the other. The only sounds we hear are distant explosions and the rasp of Number 21's breathing.

"Thank you," she whispers, "for staying with me."

I look at her eyes and see the telltale red of a logic-virus infection. I was right after all.
I sigh softly as I draw my weapon. I've seen comrades infected before.
That's why I couldn't leave her to die alone.

The vaccine she gave Lily is already ineffective. The enemy has evolved.
They studied Number 21's patterns and developed a new resistance.

No one can save her now.

"Wh-when the elevator...reaches the server," begins Number 21 weakly.

"Then I'll give you peace," I reply.

The elevator moves ever lower, creating a countdown on Number 21's life.
How much time has passed? How much can possibly be left?
Too long to wait, yet not long enough for regret.

A massive explosion echoes in the distance as the hall slowly shakes.
It's the final act of Lily and the others in the rearguard.

They just overloaded their own fusion reactors.

The sound of our comrades' demise slowly fades from our ears.
As it does, Number 21 reaches up and slowly removes her goggles.

"I'm...glad I got to meet you," she says.

Her eyes are so red. But not completely. There's still a little of herself left. And while it is...

"Don't worry," I say. "I'll be with you soon."

She smiles as my words reach her ears.
As soon as the elevator touches down, I fire a bullet into Number 21's brain.

I watch the thing that used to be her tumble to the ground. I stare at the gun I held in trembling hands. I press it to my temple. This will end it all. The war. My meaningless existence. All of it.

It will finally be over.

Unforgivable. Unforgivable. Unforgivable.Unforgivable. Unforgivable.

Your comrades sacrifice themselves and fight to the last breath. They feel suffering. They feel sadness. They feel pain and terror. And yet YOU would surrender now? Unforgivable!

The voice is a battlefield curse, telling those who survive to see their mission through no matter what.

It is another me, crying out.

I scream at the top of my lungs and race down the hall. I'll show you. If you're going to push me, I'll show you. You'll only be satisfied if it ends with more killing. I leap into the fray with weapons in both hands.

Here I am.
HERE I AM!
KILL ME!

As I scream, an explosion suddenly rises and sweeps everything away.
A soft wind touches my cheek. I smell fire. I smell ash.

The explosion in the server room was powerful enough to take out Mt. Ka'ala itself, reducing the once proud summit to a smoking crater. The machines immediately drop to the ground and stop moving.

I look out over the scorched earth. Lily? Number 16? Rose? Number 2? Are any of you...?

I am the only one left. The only one. I was alive because I had been afraid to die.
I begin to giggle. It's a mad thing, crazed, even to my own ears.
I'll join you soon... You promised to join her soon!

How could I have said such vain, laughable words? Such lies? I laugh. I stand in the smoke and the flame and laugh until I think my very throat will tear itself in two. I blink. Daylight drifts through the smoke.

I've been standing here all night.

My laughter finally depleted; I force myself to my feet. I'm the coward who stayed behind. The coward who lived. Now it's my job to carry on the will of those who fought at my side. Since I can't kill myself, I have to fight until someone does it for me. I'll endure every hardship. I'll kill every machine I find.

This is my cross to bear.

I walk slowly into the west, dragging my broken body along.

Battle Report: Pacific Area

Translation and images b

No.4 Fusion Reactor

Currently Evading Capture: A2

Record: "A2" Pursuit Log

[TOP SECRET] No.2 Type E Model Deployment Project

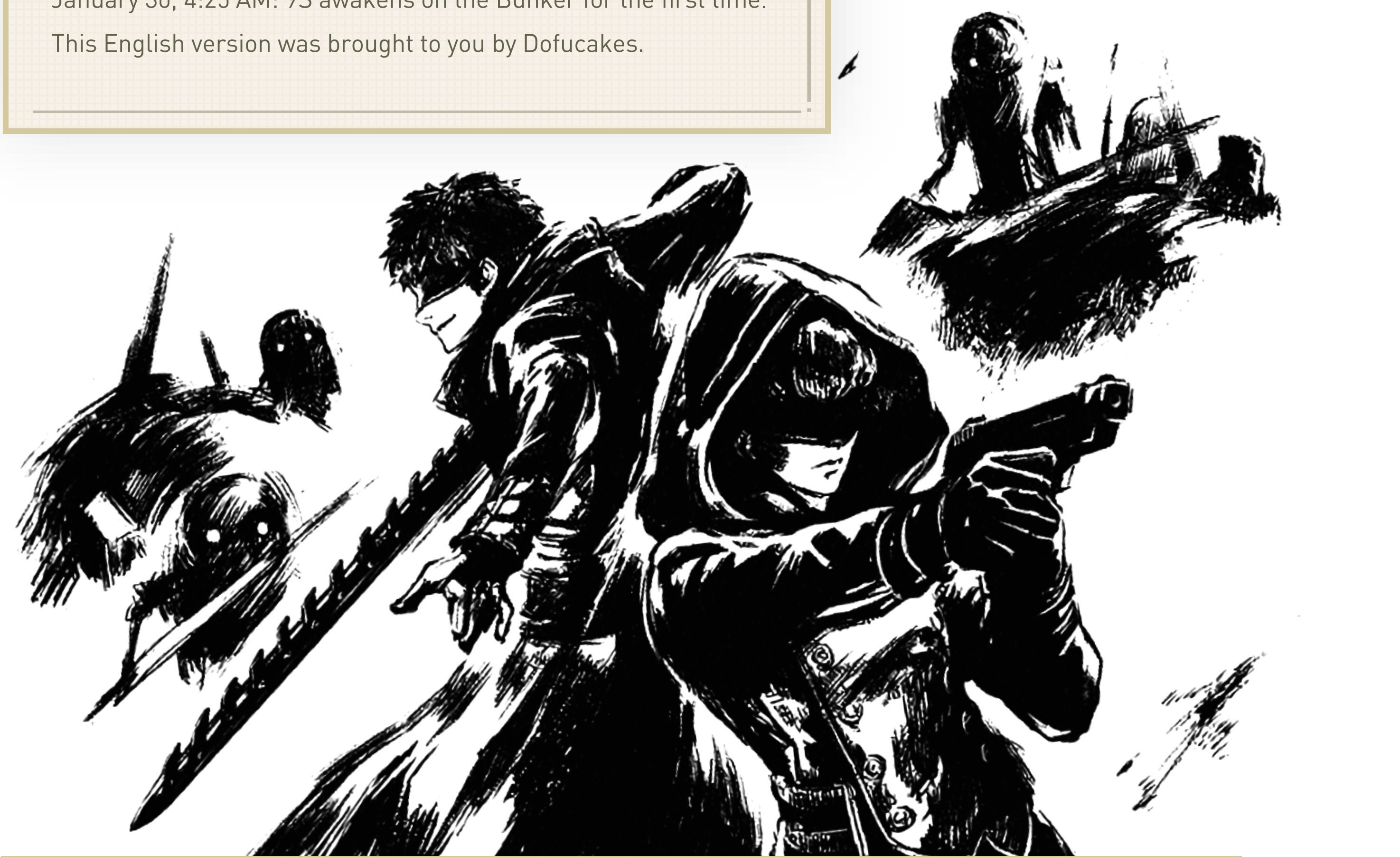
ype Attacker No.2

YoRHa Boys - Stage Play, Ver. 1.1

The YoRHa project keeps on trying new models. This time an experimental squad made of male models is formed:
The YoRHa M Squad.

January 30, 4:25 AM: 9S awakens on the Bunker for the first time.

This English version was brought to you by Dofucakes.



Chapter 1

No.22: Hey, No.21? That bird...do you know what it's called?

No.21: ...Bird?

No.22: See, the one that just flew up there. It just stopped on that tree!

No.21: In a situation like this, who cares what the bird's called?

No.9: Don't be like that. No.22's just trying to pass the time while we're here.
Why don't you try chilling out a bit?

No.22: I mean, come on. Aren't you curious?
This place...the Earth we're trying to take back... What kind of planet it really is!

No.9: Hey...
Do you hear something?

No.21: What?

No.9: This is bad! It's an EMP bomb!

(EMP bomb drops, everyone is on the floor.
A few seconds later, No.22 start convulsing and screaming)

No.21: Quick! Suppress him, No.9!

No.9: Ok, he should be fine now.

No.21: No, wait. Judging by their patterns so far, they might be sending an EMP attack.

`-Scans detect, the number of machine lifeforms within range is over 2,300-`

No.9: Isn't there something in the manual for times like this?

`-within the documented strategies there are no relevant actions available. New info must be inputted-`

No.21: It's impossible. The only attack model amongst us, No.22, is wounded. With only us, a Healer and a Scanner left, I can't think of any useful tactics. Hey, are you okay?

No.9: ...But still... Even for us...there's something we have to do.

(No.9 picks up No.22's gun and slowly raise it. He shoots and almost fall due to the massive recoil. He's been caught by No.21.)

No.21: You idiot! We aren't gunners, so we don't have the capacity to use them!

No.9: Even so... I won't give up.

No.21: Idiot!

(No.21 comes to help No.9, holding the weapon together.)

No.9: No.21...

No.21: Turn your aim around this way. No.9 put everything you have into it.
I don't know if we can do it, but it's better than doing it alone.

No.9: Got it!

No.21: Here they come! Get ready. Three...Two...One...!

(No.9 fires the gun three times and kills a machine lifeform.)

No.21: All right.
I can hear it. The enemy's attack is still approaching—!

(A laser sight can be seen on No.21's shoulder.)

No.9: No.21!

No.21: Watch out...! They're using laser snipers!

No.9: At this rate...!

(Machine lifeforms start appearing everywhere.)

No.21: Damn it!

No.9: DAMN IT!!!!

(No.3 appears from nowhere, swings his sword a few times and kills every enemy.)

No.3:	Hah! To get done in by guys like this!
No.9:	No.3...-san!
No.3:	Cut it out with the '-san'! You're always so serious, No.9, but I don't hate that about you~
No.9:	...No.3-san, an enemy—!
	(The enemy is getting shoot, No.3 and No.9 are looking at each other wondering who did it.)
No.4:	Letting your guard down after a battle's a bad habit, No.3.
No.21:	There's still enemies left!
No.3:	You're way too nitpicky, No.4!
	(Combat sequence)
No.6:	Your offensive technique's so crude and inefficient, I can't bring myself to look!
No.3:	Shut the fuck up and get to work!
	(Combat sequence)
No.6:	Yeah yeah, I got it~ How was that for you, reckless No.3?
No.3:	Add a "-san", you fucker!
No.6:	No thanks~
No.4:	We've begun the elimination of all enemy units stationed here.
No.6:	Aw, No.9, you really took a beating, didn't you?
No.9:	No.6...
No.4:	No.6, before the enemy comes, attend to the wounds of No.22 and No.21.
No.9:	Okay! Instructor!
Instructor:	Report the situation.
No.9:	After receiving the enemy's EMP bombing, I've begun treating No.22 but, he still hasn't stabilized... And No.21—
No.21:	I wasn't hit directly so I'm fine. I can work.
Instructor:	All right. We've confirmed the objective point is just 5km ahead. Our objective is to determine the source of the distress signal, and locate any survivors. With that said, the operation continues! Everyone, prepare yourselves. We depart in 15 minutes.
No.6:	Haa...things would've been easier if they're all just dead.
No.3:	Shut up, No.6!
Instructor:	No.3. Stop chattering and start getting ready. The route towards our objective is swarmed with enemies.
No.3:	Yeah, yeah.

No.21: Instructor. The M Unit was only recently established and put together.
I don't think we're suited to do a rescue mission in our current status.
If we could call HQ for reinforcements!

No.4: We can't just request for everything, No.21.
We still haven't received a response from our headquarters.

No.6: And I wonder why that is~?

No.4: There're two possibilities. Either the equipment's broken,
or there just aren't any messages coming.

No.6: No way! Why would that be?

No.4: Who knows? There're too many possibilities, so there's not much point dwelling on it.

Instructor: Whatever the case, all we have to do is follow the assigned protocol and continue towards our objective. Hurry up with the preparation. We don't have much time.

(The instructor walks away.)

No.3: Even saying that, all we have to do is destroy everything in our path, right?

No.4: If you want to die acting on your own reckless plan, die by yourself.

No.3: I'll live and come back just to beat you to death!

No.6: An unresponsive headquarters, a stiff and serious instructor, and seniors who don't get along, it's laughable, isn't it!

(No.6 also walks away. Only No.21, No.22 and No.9 are still here.)

No.21: Let's go, No.22. We can get you equipped over there.

No.9: Are you okay!?

No.22: Hey, No.9...I...

No.9: No.22!

No.21: Don't worry! He'll recover after some rest.

No.9: But, at this rate, the damage might spread to his automatized functions and—

No.21: As twin models, we can't allow this mission to fail.

No.22: It's fine! I'll be better soon.

(No.9 is now all alone.)

No.9: This...Earth... Because of the alien's appearance, it fell into ruin...
The weapon that the aliens left to fight for them, the machine life forms...
continued to multiply with an overwhelming force.
And in the blink of an eye, they'd taken over the planet.
The remnants of mankind escaped to the moon.
The only ones left behind, are the androids made to fight.
Ever since the war started, for all these years...
We androids have been continuing the battle.
That's right. Even till now, we've been facing continuous defeats.

800 1000 1100 2000 2100 2700 3000 3200 3400 3500 4000 4500

Chapter 2

(An explosion can be heard in the distance, making Cactus wakes up)

Cactus: Help, help! Help me!!!

Phlox: What's up, captain? Are you half asleep again?

Cactus: I-It was just that thing. Y'know,
that thing that's like a bad nightmare!

Phlox: That's just the enemy's bombing raid!
The sounds and lights can result in—

Cactus: Hey, I already know that much!

Lotus: (Laughing hysterically) It's a big find! I've got a big haul! This is a sensor device! Since the cost is high, there're not many opportunities to use it!



Phlox: Hey, Lotus.

Lotus: This is a (another weird thing)!!!
Wow, what's this?

Phlox: Hey, Lotus!

Lotus: Yes yes, what is it?

Phlox: How do things look outside?

Lotus: Can't you tell just by looking?
Finding raw materials has been going pretty well.
I even found some rare things here and there!

Phlox: Not that. How did the enemy situation look? You were on patrol, right?

Lotus: Oh, that!
The enemy was remodeling an artillery battery, so we should be fine for at least a while!

Cactus: After they finish something like that, won't they just come to crush us!?

Lotus: Putting it bluntly, this location is definitely not favorable! Even if the battery's destroyed, it's final attack will send a virus and then they'll make another one.

Cactus: So, if we could transmit that virus to the enemy—

Lotus: If that happened, the enemy alert level should explode, and they'd bring weapons to make craters bigger than who knows how many meters.
With that said, there's really not much to be done!

Cactus: Goddamn! Doesn't that mean we're in deep shit?

Lotus: My main point is, following Cactus' plan and coming this far into enemy territory in the first place was, y'know!

Cactus: T-that!! Hey, you guys all chose to go with me!

(Cactus runs toward Lotus)

Phlox: Stop it, Lotus. When we first came here, there was a large population of machine lifeforms, so it makes sense we couldn't get a response.

Lotus: Well, I guess that's true.

Cactus: Whichever's fine. Whatever works I guess.

Phlox: With Lotus' information, we can defeat enemies for now, but we can't go on like this forever. Since this box released a distress signal, all we can do is wait and hope it reaches another group out there.

(Both Phlox and Lotus walk to the mysterious white box. The box is about 2.5 meters high.)

Lotus: What even is this box? We don't even have a clue what could possibly be inside! None of our weapons can even scratch it, and there's no sign of how to open it! (Knocking at the box) Anyone there!?

Cactus:

Stop it stop it stop!!
Y'kno this box...I bet inside's some kinda crazy equipment left by mankind!
Something way cooler than what any other Resistances have!
And then...we'll be able to face anything

Phlox: Captain! We're warriors fighting for the sake of mankind, remember? It's good to be honest, but you could probably afford to hold back a bit.

Lotus: Still, I really don't hate that shady part about Captain.

(Lotus's tablet makes some beeping noises)

Lotus: Huh?

Cactus: What?

Lotus: It looks like that fort just collapsed!

Phlox: What happened to the machine lifeform's virus?

Lotus: We should find out as soon as we get more signals.

(Another beeping noise)

Lotus: Ah! Just another fort got destroyed!

(In the distance, an explosion occurs. They get knocked to the ground.)

Cactus: What was that!? What was it!?

Lotus: The barricades I made are disappearing one by one!

Cactus: I'm gonna die!

Phlox: Shut up, Captain! Lotus, start figuring out how to escape!

Lotus: Wait a minute! As the enemy destroys, they just keep getting closer!

Phlox: Captain, get your gun! Lotus, go inside and hide!

(Another explosion, but much closer this time, an android body falls on the ground.)

Cactus: W-w-w-w-who where what is that!??

Phlox: It's an android! Don't shoot!

Lotus:	Wait! There's still the chance he's infected by an enemy logic virus!
Phlox:	What's the plan?
	(All of them carefully and silently approach the unmoving body)
No.3:	(Suddenly waking up) It hurts like hell you dumb fuck! What happened to covering me, huh!?
No.4:	Sticking your neck out there like an idiot, how the hell am I supposed to cover you? (Speaking the Resistance group) So you're the ones who sent the distress signal. We've come to help you guys.
No.9:	No.3-san!
No.3:	Hey No.9! Fix me!
No.9:	Ah, yes.
Phlox:	You guys...you've come a long way getting through all those encirclements!
No.3:	Yeah, there might've been a ton of machine lifeforms, but compared to us they're just a bunch of weak shits!
No.4:	Getting your ass kicked by a bunch of 'weak shits', you should try reflecting a bit—
No.3:	Haah!?
Lotus:	Wait a second! Did you destroy the enemies to get here?
No.3:	Yeah, we wrecked every single machine standing in our way to get here.
Instructor:	Is everyone safe? We are a unit of newly developed YoRHa model androids. The M Unit.
Cactus:	Did you come here...to save us?
Instructor:	That's right. After receiving your distress signal, we made our way here.
No.6:	We really went through a lot to get this far!
Phlox:	That signal...it wasn't sent by us.
Instructor:	Huh?
Phlox:	The one who sent the distress signal wasn't us! It was sent by this box!
Instructor:	Box?
Cactus:	This box is a precious object we went through a lot to discover. So we can't let you people mess around with it. However, well...if it's just looking, I guess I can allow that much.
	(The instructor inspects the box)
Instructor:	Identification number, 219432-D. This box is locked shut, so it won't open. ID number 219432D, requesting unlock. Authority confirmation. This is YoRHa M Unit's Instructor, Black.
	`-Authority confirmed. Beginning resuscitation-`
Cactus:	What's happening!?
Phlox:	The box is—
	(The box opens and an unconscious android body falls to the ground.)

No.21:	An android! Is it alive?
No.9:	Wait! Huh?... This is a YoRHa uniform...
Lotus:	Excuse me, excuse me!
No.3:	The hell's up with this?
Cactus:	Was this part of your plan? What do you guys know!?
Instructor:	This is! No.2... Type D.
	(A long silence. Then, out of nowhere, Lotus screams)
Cactus:	Lotus what's your problem! Can't you see we're having a situation here??
Lotus:	That may be the case, but there's the case that this isn't the case so I thought I should say something. I mean this could be something really important, and seeing it was locked in a mysterious box it could be even more important! So that's why we should try prioritizing communication and focus on that one thing! If it's an ally, we can get positive information was what I was thinking—
Cactus:	Okay, I get it!!
Phlox:	We get it. So what did you want to say?
Lotus:	That guy in black from earlier!
Cactus:	All of them are in black.
Lotus:	The one with short bangs that was really violent.
No.3:	(Getting up) Got a problem?
Lotus:	You just said earlier, you destroyed all those machines on the way here!
No.3:	Yeah? So what about it?
Lotus:	Actually, we were in a really bad situation when we got to this place and took refuge. And so we've been careful not to kill any enemies while here!
No.3:	And why would you go through such trouble?
Lotus:	If we make any flashy moves and are noticed by the enemy leader, the enemy will mark us!
No.9:	What happens if you get marked?
Lotus:	This may be kind of hard to believe, but judging by what's happened before, they'll source wherever a lot of androids are and send a massive attack! So we've come this far understanding the enemy can blow us up if we pull any wrong moves! See... something just like that.
	(A massive explosion.)

Chapter 3 [2 months ago]

	(No.3 and No.4 are fighting, in the end, No.4 points a gun at a disarmed No.3)
No.3:	Hey, that's just playing dirty!
No.4:	You were too lenient at the end. Don't think things will go better on the battlefield.
No.3:	If this was the battlefield, I would've killed you already in my first hit!
Instructor:	In the heat of battle, you can only kill! To machine lifeforms, words have no meaning. There's no chance of them letting you off easily. If you let down your guard for even a second, the only thing that awaits is defeat.
No.3 and No.4:	Yes sir.
Instructor:	Fall back!
No.3:	But Instructor! How long do we have to keep up this training?
No.4:	We don't have a choice! With only two of us, we can't form a proper team or keep formation.
No.3:	But we can do shit like search and destroy missions on our own, can't we!?
No.4:	With just a Gunner and an Attacker, with no way of scanning for enemies. We'd get surrounded and totally defeated, why don't you think a little and try to understand, use your empty head for once in your life.
No.3:	What was that you bastard?
Instructor:	No.3! You're always too irritable. No.4 also tends to get overly worked up. Besides that, I have some good news for the two of you.
No.3:	Huh?
Instructor:	Come in!
A group:	Yes sir!
	(Four androids enter the room)
Instructor:	These are the new team members joining us today. Official number, M002. M001, these will be your new junior members.
No.3:	So you guys finally show up! Nice to meet you, newbies!
No.4:	You do know we also only just joined this unit half a month ago, right?
Instructor:	All of you aren't that much different. 02 introduce yourselves individually.
No.21:	I've been assigned to the YoRHa M Unit. Scanner type, No.21. My specialty is seeking out the enemy and doing analysis.
No.22:	Uh, um! I'm uh... Just assigned to YoRHa Unit M... I'm a Gunner, No.22... My specialty is...
No.3:	Hey hey, can someone like this really fight??
No.4:	Shut up. Stop putting on airs like an idiot.
Instructor:	Next!
No.6:	Assigned to the YoRHa M unit, I'm No.6! My specialty is as an Attacker, but I have a lot of skill in other areas too~❤

No.9: Assigned to the YoRHa M Unit! Healer type, No.9!
My duty is repairing the incapacitated and backing up unit personal data!

No.4: Backing up personal data? This is a new thing, isn't it?

No.9: Yes! The personal data is protected so that in case a unit is destroyed, they can be restored with their memories.
So that's why my storage can hold up to 10x more than everyone else's.

No.3: Oh, ten times, that's crazy!

No.9: E-Even though I say that this is something that can only be used when necessary, so generally I can't do anything special.

Instructor: Come on. 01, introduce yourselves too.

No.3: YoRHa M unit! Attacker No.3! I'm glad to get more teammates. Nice to meet you!

No.4: YoRHa M Unit. Gunner, No.4. Instructor. I have a question.

Instructor: What is it?

No.4: The members of 002 altogether make 4. But the plans said they would be 5.
With us included, wasn't this supposed to be a 7 person unit?

Instructor: It's been decided that the last member will be joining us at a later date.
So in the meantime, you'll begin operations as a 6 person unit.

No.4: Understood.

Instructor: As you all know. Our orbiting satellite headquarters is renowned primarily for its female model forces. YoRHa has begun its true operation. We are recently developed male models, and together we form a brand new experimental test unit.
Compared to other YoRHa units until now, this is a first of its kind that holds new expectations. Our given duty is to bring an end to this eternal stalemate, turn the tides on the state of this war and lead mankind to victory! Of course... these are words that are already engraved deep into each and every one of us.
For the glory of mankind!

Everyone: For the glory of mankind!

YOKO FACT 20 - From the Strategy Guide Q&A with Yoko Taro (translated by /u/Merutan)

Why do androids come in female and male models?

Because they're based on humans. To be more precise, since androids were first created when humans (not the replicants) still existed (Devola and Popola being an example), they came in female and male models. The newer androids were based on the first models, so that's why androids still had female and male types even after humanity died out.

How much does it cost to produce a YoRHa type android?

A lot. The value of money has changed too drastically in the NieR world to compare to our current standards, but one YoRHa unit has about the same value as one state-of-the-art fighter jet in our world. The flight units are even more expensive, and cost about ten times that of a regular YoRHa unit.

Chapter 4 [The present]

	(An explosion can be heard in the distance, making Cactus wakes up)
Lotus:	It hurts— Ow... Hellooooo?? Anyone!? Is anyone there?? Hey!!!!
	(Lotus looks around for survivors. After a while he decides to sit down)
Phlox:	It hurts!! You're heavy, idiot...
	(Lotus looks around him, wondering who said that.)
Lotus:	Aaah, Phlox! What are you doing in a place like this!?
Phlox:	First, get off...
Lotus:	Phlox, do you have any injuries??
Phlox:	First, just get off
Lotus:	I'm glad you're here...
Phlox:	First, just get off!! ...Where's the Captain?
Lotus:	I don't know, I just woke up...
Phlox:	Damn it... ugh! Hey!! Captain!! Captain Cactus!!
No.6:	(Waking up) Ahh, I got my best outfit all dirty! Aw geez...
Lotus:	Huh?
No.6:	You guys are still alive! Wow, you must have good luck!
Lotus:	Both of us... It seems the bombing raid just barely missed the both of us!
No.6:	Ehhhh, lucky!
Phlox:	Where's everyone else?
No.6:	Who knows.
Phlox:	"Who knows"? Aren't you worried at all??
No.6:	Even if I was worried, if they're dead they're dead, and if they're alive they're alive.
No.4:	I can hear you, so try acting a bit more serious.
No.6:	Okaaay
Instructor:	No.9, are you okay? No.4! Go look for everyone else.
No.4:	Understood
Phlox:	Has anyone seen our leader?
Instructor:	Yeah. He's right over there.

Lotus:	Captain!!
Phlox:	What a relief! Captain? Captain! Wake up! Captain! It's morning!!
Lotus:	DIE!!! (He says while lifting a rock. He hit the ground with the rock, close to their leader's head)
	(Cactus wakes up, screaming)
Lotus:	You should know too, Phlox-san. Captain won't wake up unless you do it like this!
Cactus:	There should be other ways to do it than this! Were you trying to kill me!? You said 'die'!
Lotus:	I did.
Cactus:	You—!!
Phlox:	Stop! The YoRHa Unit guys are here right now.
Instructor:	YoRHa Unit.
No.4:	Instructor! I've found No.2.
Instructor:	No.9. Begin his startup process.
No.9:	U-Understood!
No.4:	Instructor. So this No.2 guy must be...
Instructor:	He's the final member of the YoRHa M Unit. No.2 Type D. Defense model. He was originally meant to be a part of M01, but had to have last minute correction made. So plans changed to have him join later on.
Cactus:	So he's you guys' ally!?
Instructor:	Sorry about all this.
Cactus:	But—damn. And here I thought we finally dug something up that could be used to live in a machine lifeform-free place.
No.9:	Instructor! No.2 is activating!
No.2:	Where am I...
Instructor:	This is a place northwest of the main Resistance camp.
No.2:	You are...?
Instructor:	We are the YoRHa M Unit. The unit you've been assigned to. I am Black, the Instructor, and I lead this unit. Just to be sure, run a vitals and logic virus check. No.9, I'm counting on you.
No.9:	Yes! I'm on it.
Instructor:	Where are the rest? They shouldn't have been taken out so easily by an attack like that.
No.4:	If Scanner No.21 was here, things would be easier.
Instructor:	No.21! Are you here!?

No.21:	I'm right here! My leg...
Instructor:	No.9! Go check.
No.9:	Understood! But, No.2-san's still—
No.2:	I'll be fine. Please go check up on him.
No.9:	Got it! Are you okay?
No.21:	My leg...
Phlox:	You people...what on earth kind of unit are you? And all dressed totally in black—
Instructor:	We are the YoRHa M Unit. Newest developed specialized android force.
Lotus:	Newest developed!? R-really? That sounds very interesting, huh!
	(Lotus runs toward the closest YoRHa android (No.4) and start to examine him. No.4 seems displeased)
Instructor:	Our equipment is all the newest developed, all made to have improved stealth, durability and function.
Lotus:	What about the blindfold?
Instructor:	This gear works to scan enemy weaknesses and status.
Lotus:	Please let me have it!!
Instructor:	No!
Lotus:	Noo! (He falls to the ground in a very dramatic way)
No.9:	Instructor! It's No.21... His leg frame has been badly damaged. I tried my best to do repairs, but we don't have enough parts available here! We need to return to our base camp!
Instructor:	I understand. No.21, can you perform a scan?
No.21:	I can do it.
Instructor:	Good.
No.9:	H-hey, wait (He helps No.21 to get up.)
No.21:	Over there... and over there, I'm getting a black box residual response...
Instructor:	No.6! No.4! Bring them here.
No.6:	Eehhh, isn't No.9 going to help at all? Even though he's in perfect health...
Instructor:	What are you saying? He isn't designed to be suitable for physical work like you are!
No.9:	But!! I want to help too! Maybe with me, we can finish a little faster.
	(No.9 begins to walk away, following No.6. Meanwhile, No.4 is coming back with a body)
Instructor:	NO.9!

No.9: Y-yes... (Check on the android)...It's no good...
It seems like the black box is in emergency suspension...

Cactus: Can't you just wake him up like the other one?

No.6: For us YoRHa units, the black box acts as our central core component. When put in emergency suspension, you enter preservation mode and all functions are put on halt.

Lotus: And then??

No.6: The energy supply to the mind is cut off, and the memory storage will get shut down!

No.9: No.9! Reactivate him.

Cactus: The memory shutting down...doesn't that mean he's dead?

No.6: That'd be the case for just any other android...

(No.9 reactivate No.3. At first, he seems confused. He gets up)

No.3: How long...

No.9: For about 35 hours and 32 minutes...

Cactus: He came back to life!

No.3: Damn it!! For that long...

No.6: No.9, explain it to them. I don't wanna.

No.9: We the YoRHa M unit... as a defensive procedure...We can back up our personal data.

Cactus: Personal data?

No.9: Like our memories, battle skills, and mannerisms...
As the healer, I have every member of our team's data backed up, storing it in our server.

Cactus: So you don't have to worry about getting hurt!

Instructor: It's not that simple! Backing up the personal data takes up a lot of time!

No.9: That's why it's only possible to start backing up during safe circumstances.
The last time I backed up was...

No.3: 35 hours ago.

Lotus: So it's like getting restarted?
His memories from the last 35 hours should have disappeared. So it's like getting amnesia!

(No.9 reactivates No.22 whose head is resting on No.21 lap)

No.21: Are you okay?

No.22: I...

No.6: Amnesia has nothing to do with it. His personal data was rewound. When we've been restored after a backup, compared to who we were before dying... it's a different person.

No.4: Within these two months, no matter how many times we die... We can be brought back to life.

Chapter 5 [Flashbacks]

No.9:	We are YoRHa soldiers. Beings who repeatedly live and die. We are weapons who were created to fight. To take back this planet that the aliens stole from us. And until that day, we just have to continue this endless killing.
	--
No.3:	No.6 and I have been completely surrounded by the enemy!
No.6:	It's because you idiotically threw yourself into the enemy!
No.3:	Before this battle, we hadn't had time to backup our data.
No.6:	Since then...it's been 72 hours. If we died now, the us who've lived these past 72 hours, will have disappeared from this world!
No.3:	For the sake of turning around this situation, I can lure the enemy and use that one chance to break through.
No.6:	There's no way a dangerous plan like that could work out!
No.3:	I'll lure them with a transmission signal and then strike, cutting through them from behind.
	(No.6 pierces No.3 from behind with his sword, a smile on his face.)
No.6:	Come on... With a plan like that, wouldn't I be put in danger too?
No.3:	So my last memory before I shut down— would be No.6's twisted smile!
No.6:	This was really the best! No.3's stupid expression, that is. Well, it's the same for me. The machine lifeforms chasing us will catch up to me, I'll get killed and meet the same miserable end~
	--
Instructor:	No matter how severe the circumstances, giving up is never an option. Because this is the duty we've been cursed with.
	--
No.22:	What we found in the machine lifeforms' server...
No.21:	That was... The enemy base, hidden deep within the sea. Even together, we couldn't defeat the enemy. As we tried to escape, the route collapsed.
No.22:	Within that cold server room... we weren't able to move at all. Even though No.21 could have escaped alone... He protected me and stayed behind with me.
No.21:	I could never leave No.22 behind.
No.22:	If only my leg had never been damaged.
No.21:	As twin models, we stand together at all times!
No.22:	Deep within the dark ocean, we were trapped there together.

No.21: There were no options to choose from.
We could only die together with the bomb we brought.

No.22: Since we have our black boxes, No.9 can reinstall our data for us. However...

No.21: The us who've survived these past 120 hours will die.

No.22: Steadily, things become more hopeless.

No.21: No.22 took severe damage to his abdomen, having taken a hit for me.
His vitals began to decline. His vision... His hearing... His sense of touch...
No.22 is slowly deteriorating and all I can do is watch.

No.22: Hey, No.21? I... I-I'm not scared. Because... No.21 is... with me... by my side...

(No.21 dies in this instant.)

Instructor: We can't rest. We can't even be cut down. Until the day the Earth is reclaimed...
We throw away our emotions and have no choice but to continue the battle.

No.9: The recently established YoRHa Experimental Unit... going through these long missions, and coming back to find them on the battlefield, in practically every place, they'd be completely annihilated. Being the one who had to backup everyone's data, I was always the only one left alive. I'd recover their memories from their remains.
I understood that this was all for the sake of protecting mankind.
But still... Their endless battle, having to keep repeating it, dying and being revived,

Our souls were left...broken.

Chapter 6 [The present]

No.22: So it's no good after all...

No.9: Hmm... No matter how much we can try to fix the program, a burn will be difficult to recover.

No.22: Please don't overdo it, No.21.

Lotus: Huh? Where's Captain Cactus and them?

No.9: They're out guarding the perimeter.

Lotus: But you guys are really something, huh!
With old models like us, you guys could just ignore us and go home!

No.21: Us YoRHa soldiers have always cooperated with the androids on Earth.
So we're going to find a way to get you guys out of here.

Lotus: Really? That sounds like a lotta trouble.

No.21: Though honestly, I'm disgusted by cowardly Resistance members who ran from the enemy.

No.9: You got a point.

No.22: No.21, that's going too far.

(Silence)

Lotus: Do you know the law of worker ants?

No.9: What's that?

Lotus: Though all of them are working, if the system collapses, they can't work anymore
That's why in any organization, at least 40% won't be going out into danger.

No.21: Well, that makes sense.

Lotus: I guess so.

No.21: Where are you going?

Lotus: So that everyone can feel safe tonight, I'm gonna go over our concealment system. Our sensor right now used parts from some big machine lifeforms but the evolution of machines is really something! What if I told you about the kind of sensors I found on them!?

No.21: Not interested.

Lotus: I thought so. Oh yea, No.2 wanted to see you, No.9.

No.9: Eh

Lotus: He said the logic virus scan was finished.

No.9: Oh, okay. I'll go right now! No.21. Don't overdo it, okay?

No.21: Got it.

(As soon as No.9 goes away, No.22 gets up.)

No.22: Stop! No.9 just said it! If you don't move carefully, your parts will break again!

No.21: No.22. About that issue from earlier, have you given it some thought?

No.22: No... not yet...

No.21: Well then, please think about it. We don't have much time left.

No.3: Goddamn, being stuck in this ugly ass battlefield. Always getting surrounded by the enemy.
Even having to look for repair parts with those Resistance members dragging us back.
And that shady new guy too!

No.4: By "shady guy" do you mean No.2?

No.3: Yeah!

No.4: No.2 was already assigned to be in our unit from the beginning. So he can't be "shady".

No.3: Not like that, that's not what I mean! How do I put this... Is he more like a friend?
A war buddy? I'm not getting any vibes from him at all! I don't know! You feel me?

No.4: No

No.3:	Ugh, you can't read the atmosphere, No.4!
	(Phlox and Cactus had difficulties catching up the YoRHa walking speed. They finally arrive, exhausted)
Cactus:	Wait up a bit!
No.3:	Oh, so you guys came too!
Phlox:	We'd feel bad just getting helped one-sidedly. So we thought we could try to help.
No.3:	Hmph, it should be fine with just us two newer models. It'd be fine if you Resistance guys just ran off!
No.4:	No.3, you're being rude.
Phlox:	It's fine. It's true that you guys are stronger. I mean, the machine lifeforms in this area, we've been holding them back all this time.
No.3:	Us YoRHa models are... the ultimate Attackers designed to wipe out machine lifeforms or whatever else. You should rely on us more.
No.4:	Sorry about him. It's true that he's skilled in combat, but... He's an idiot.
No.3:	Agh, shut up, you're in the way, so get outta here!
Cactus:	For us Resistance too, we've been fighting for all these years. Even if we aren't as strong as you guys, we have years of experience! Don't look down on older folk.
No.3:	Experience?
Cactus:	Yeah! When it comes to experience, I've been out here. Like proficiency...or whatever. We have some skills!
Phlox:	Come on! Our Captain really hates to lose. Though he can be a coward.
Cactus:	What do you mean by "coward"!? Aren't you lacking respect towards your Captain?
	(Moment of silence. No.3 burst into laughter.)
No.3:	Okay, okay!
	(Cactus is on the ground, he seems to have difficulties getting up.)
No.4:	What's wrong!
Cactus:	My back... It gave out.
No.4:	Huh?
Phlox:	Again?? You always tend to hurt it, so I've told you to be careful!!
No.4:	How much can you do if you get hurt from something like that?
No.3:	Well, at least don't overdo it.
	(Machine's noises)
No.4:	No.3, the enemy's coming.

No.3: 'K

No.4: It looks like multiple types.

No.3: I get it!

(A lot of fighting)

No.3: Just weaklings!

No.4: No.3, they're coming!

No.3: What is it!

No.4: Can't you tell by looking, it's the enemy!

No.3: Huh??

(A huge enemy appears)

No.3: You're in the way!

(The fight is over.)

No.4: That's why I've been saying not to get lenient near the end.

Phlox: Captain? Can you move on your own?

(Cactus finally gets up with the help of Phlox.
He almost falls after walking a few meters, but he's able to continue by himself.)

No.3: Phlox-san. Things are rough for you too, huh.

Phlox: Even though Captain's like that... He used to be recklessly brave.

No.3: Huh?

Phlox: He'd throw himself into over hundreds of machine lifeforms bases.
And every time, he'd come back alive. He's a hero who's fought for a long time.
Captain Cactus was part of this region's best Resistance group...
A lot of other soldiers had gathered there. It was around the time Lotus and I had joined.
Both of us... we were grouped with Captain Cactus, and rather than a team, we became like a family. As our team gained more experience, we also got more and more results on the battlefield. We began to face many expectations.

One day, Captain was given a mission while leading a group of boys. There's not much to say about it... It should've been an easy mission. We chased after the retreating machine lifeforms and there were more enemies than expected. We had found their leading server location. We were so happy! If we could strike down their server, all the enemies connected to its network should go down with it. However...it was the machine lifeforms' trap.
Suddenly, the main forces of enemies made their appearance. We felt hopeless in such a situation. However! As expected of our top soldier, Captain Cactus continued to fight, and sought out victory! But even with that victory... The boys he'd come with had all died.

If we'd only been a little more cautious...

No.3: So something like that had happened...

Phlox: Well! So he's really not that weak of a person, Captain. It's just...
He's just a little lost right now. At that time... what could we have even done?

Chapter 7 [Preparations]

Instructor: Today, we're receiving some new equipment.
And that is the Supporter System, model Delta, Behavioral Ver. 153 Information Device.

No.3: What a lame name.

Instructor: Its shorthand name is just SS. Its usage function is like this, SS! Tomorrow's weather.

-The weather in this vicinity should be mostly clear, slightly cloudy- -Chance of rains past 5 pm-

No.6: For something like that, aren't our built-in scanners good enough?

Instructor: The SS is capable of sending transmissions where the YoRHa HQ can't transmit.
It can even do basic maintenance checks.

(No.6 is slowly walking out of the scene)

Instructor: Where do you think you're going? Run a logic virus check.

No.6: Uh, huh? My body is... (No.6 laughs a little, then emits some good yaoi moans...)

Instructor: That's enough.

No.6: What was that just now?

Instructor: It was a verification check for the presence of viruses.
In this case, checking should become a routine.

No.9: Then... if we have something like that, can we cure someone if they get hit by a virus?

Instructor: According to the situation, it can analyze the possibility of removing viruses.
When it comes to logic viruses, there's still not enough information, however...
Surely with some updates that can be taken care of.
Each person will have access to the SS bound to them. Everyone can learn to use it.

No.6: Excuse me, Instructor!

Instructor: What is it?

No.6: That virus check just now... It really tickled...and it kind of felt really good...
Could I please ask if you can do it again? If you can, then in a place with just the two of us—!

Instructor: Rejected. In 196 minutes, I want everyone back here and well equipped. That is all.

(As soon as Black left the group)

No.3: Oh, hey. Heyy!! What's up with you! Do you go for guys too??

No.6: Who knows~I wouldn't usually try to catch someone who shares my unit, but...
Perhaps... violent guys like No.3 just might be my type~

No.3: It's No.3-san! I'm your senior so use proper language!!

No.6: Okay, okay~!

No.4: No.3. Let's go pick up the equipment.

No.3: No.4. (He approach No.4) So you're really... not gonna be an Attacker. You're more suited to it.

No.4: We've already settled this matter, haven't we?

(No.4 goes away. No.3 stay there for a bit. No.9 tries to approach No.3 to comfort him but decides to leave him alone. Finally, No.3 also goes away.)

No.9: Hey. What he just said...what's it about?

No.21: Oh. No.4 is a Gunner right now, but he was originally an Attacker.

No.9: An Attacker?

No.21: Yeah. He used a sword, just like No.3.
But then he switched to a Gunner without telling No.3.

No.22: But I've heard that when it comes to sword fighting, No.4 is way better!

No.3: I can hear you No.22!!! I'll remember this later!

No.22: Ah, ah, No.3-san, ah..! ...What do I do?

(They look at each other in silence before everyone burst into laughter)

No.9: We've finally got some real experience. Are you nervous?

No.21: Just hold your ground, and things should go as usual.

No.22: No.21, you're pretty strong huh. I'm scared!

No.21: There's nothing to be afraid of.
Even if we died, No.9 could always use our back up data to bring us back.
Since even if we get destroyed, our black boxes will stay intact.

No.22: Well yeah, that's true... Dying on the battlefield...for sure... It's gonna be hard and hurt a lot, huh. And on top of that, right at that painful moment...you just disappear!
It sounds awful. Suffering and dying... I don't wanna die.

No.9: I'm sorry. I'm always just...standing in a safe place in the back.

No.22: Ah, n-no— I didn't mean it like that...

No.21: No.9 has an important duty to backup all of our data.
If he doesn't stay safe that's an even bigger problem.

No.22: And if No.9 isn't there, we wouldn't have anyone to help repair us!

No.9: Thanks. I'll do my best! Finding a way so everyone can fight without any worries...

No.22: Eh...

No.21: Of course, I'm not gonna let a situation like that happen.
As a Scanner, I'll search for the enemies and draft a plan accordingly.
All No.22 has to do is listen to me. No matter what... I'll protect you.

No.22: Eh...

(Everyone has left except for No.9)

No.9: Our lives when working together... it was almost like a human school.
There were cowards... people who were afraid to pick up a sword like me.
I felt proud knowing I'd be backing everyone up. Even though I couldn't fight, there was something I could do. That's how I felt. That's...how I used to feel.

No.2: How is it, No.9?

No.9: It should be fine... I ran a virus check, and there weren't any responses.

No.2: Um... could you... drop the formal talk with me?

No.9: But...No.2-san was a part of M01, so that makes you my senior.

No.2: But looking at when I joined and how I'm really the newest... just talk casually with me.

No.9: But—

No.2: Then—! What if I said it's an order from your senior?
So speaking casually... it's good to meet you.

No.9: Yes sir! ...Wait, uh... Yeah.

No.2: Yeah, yeah, just like that.

No.9: Oh yeah! It's just when I was looking at the server earlier...
With this, if we use this tape you can improve recovery.

No.2: Huh?

No.9: It might get stiff, but your artificial muscles will start to change.
It'll make repairs go faster!

No.2: But, then I can't act as efficiently on the battlefield.

No.9: For that reason too, it's best if you heal up quickly!

(No.9 grabs No.2 arm and starts to apply the bandage.)

No.2: Thanks.

No.9: So you're a D Type, right? I don't really know for sure,
but what kind of specialty do D Types have?

No.2: D Type means Defender! The defensive model has a natural resistance against silent and logic virus attacks. A test model.

No.9: Test model?

No.2: Right. My body was built with these things in mind, so I'm pretty proficient at silent attacks, defense maneuvers, and dealing with logic viruses too.

No.9: That's amazing!

No.2: So that's why... I can handle any new enemy attacks.
And of course, standing before you and dying for you guys. That's my job too.

No.9:	That's troubling for me! My role is healer, so it's my part to repair everyone. (In a serious tone) I'd appreciate it if you didn't give me more work.
	(They both start laughing)
No.9:	Up until now... Everyone else... They've died many times. So for that reason, I have to re-install their personal data. Or I'm supposed to... From their bodies... The pain from death... That empty feeling... I almost feel like... it touches me... That's why, if it's possible, try not to die... No.2.
No.2:	Got it.
No.9:	I'll go get some water!
No.2:	Wait, there's still a lot in the—
No.9:	It'd worry me if you froze up on the battlefield. So save as much energy as you can! Wait here!
	(No.2 now been alone, Black come closer, approaching him)
Black:	The satellite headquarters... The Bunker requested you to come, didn't it? When did this start?
No.2:	You don't have the authority to hear the current operation plan.
Black:	No.2 Type D... How long do you plan to use that name?
No.2:	That title should be the same as—
	(No.2 starts to walk away.)
Black:	No.2!... ...Type E.
	(No.2 freezes)
Black:	A specialized force with the sole purpose of executing YoRHa units. To protect order and vital YoRHa information. And preventing use by enemies. The assigned duty to destroy black boxes... However, that too is a lie. In truth, it's a model designed to prevent rebellion among YoRHa ranks. Hidden in their hand... Mankind's trump card.
No.2:	I haven't been given the right to answer. But I can say one thing. Among the YoRHa Experimental M Unit, you're the one serving their own purposes the most. The information for all other units are... All disposed of...
Black:	And what about you? If you start catching any feelings... You won't be able to kill your friends anymore.
No.2:	There's no need to worry about that. I've had a lot of practice.
Black:	Is that so.
	(Black leaves. No.2 looks at the bandage that No.9 did for him...)
	--
	(Everyone's laughing cheerfully)

Cactus:	This is a true story! It's true, it's true. Okay so the machine lifeforms were there, and I told Lotus to get over. I managed to get this done and that done, but they were standing like this. And what are you guys wrong about, it's like they only went up to the knees. And they were even walking like this. And then, wait wait wait, okay first. So they had these flyer units coming in like this, and this machine lifeform had like two heads. So I had to shoot both heads like bang bang, and you know how machines are. And their heads were just, da da da da da, inching in closer. And they had my head squeezed between 'em like this. Like the one on the left and right coming in like that. My head's brain unit was gonna explode from this pressure! This was bad! But then Cactus made a single shot at its heart! Was it gonna fall!? This life or death experience was just 2 weeks ago, really ended with a bang.
	(Everyone is enjoying Cactus story, he really seems to have a talent for storytelling)
Cactus:	It seemed impossible for me. Can't believe I made it out of that.
No.3:	That's a damn lie if I've heard one!
Cactus:	It's true!
	(The instructor Black, arrives. Everyone get up and stare at him.)
Instructor:	We've decided on an escape route.
	(Cactus shout in joy, hugging Lotus.)
Instructor:	However, it won't be easy! Now listen closely. (A holographic map appears) This here is us. And this is the enemy. As you can see, we're right in the center of the enemy forces. It's a situation where we'll have to slip through any chance opening. While our position hasn't been exposed to the enemy yet, it's only a matter of time.
No.4:	What about a rescue team sent from the air?
Instructor:	In this area, the enemy has full coverage of the sky. There are no locations that can receive a backup team.
No.9:	Can't the satellite target a laser attack from above?
Instructor:	It should be impossible to accurately burn the enemies here. And besides that... Headquarters hasn't given us approval to use the satellite lasers.
No.3:	Why not?
Instructor:	To avoid allowing cooperating forces to recklessly use the laser, and to allow us to first analyze the abilities of these enemies. That's how the systems set up.
No.3:	So they don't want to waste their trump cards on us, huh!
Instructor:	It's not all bad news that we have. Lotus. I'll leave to you what I gave earlier.

Lotus:	Yes! Um, well... This area used to be in control of the Resistance. However, after getting totally annihilated a few years back ...ever since, this place has been abandoned! What I'm gonna talk about, is an interesting characteristic the machines around here have! This is an extremely interesting and important part so make sure you're listening closely! So the machine lifeforms, against us Resistance... androids in general... Seems they make a BIG distinction between them and anything else!
Instructor:	And so.
Lotus:	And so! So what I mean, is if you take a gun... And like this... just leave it right here. The machines won't pay the weapons any mind, only targeting and coming after us!!
No.3:	Chased without a weapon, isn't that worst case scenario?
Lotus:	So what we have to do is not to be us, but to be weapons!! The weapons!!!
Phlox:	Lotus! I know you're always like this, but your explanations so messy that no one can follow!
Lotus:	Ah, I guess that's true. Okay, so, as I said earlier, this place used to be under Resistance control. In order to guard the area...we have an aircraft warehouse! And then the—
No.21:	And then. (He pushes aside Lotus, finishing the speech himself) So if we can infiltrate this warehouse...We can avoid getting targeted by remaining enemies.
No.9:	I see! So even if there are androids on a transport aircraft, the machines won't follow!
Cactus:	So we're gonna use it to escape!?
No.21:	To confirm the safety, we need a guarantee—
Instructor:	There is no guarantee. But we have no other choice.
No.9:	Ah.... but...the enemy has the upper hand in air warfare right...
No.21:	We have a plan to counter that. The airborne machines we're dealing with... are controlled remotely by control towers.
Instructor:	And that's right here. If we can destroy these control towers, all the airborne machines should cease to function. This mission will be run by Lotus and No.21. However, for me, I don't have the right to command you Resistance members. What will you do?
Cactus:	Phlox!
Phlox:	It's Captain's decision.
Cactus:	I see... You guys...Lotus, come here! We'll lend our strength and skills! Let's work together! No... Please let us cooperate!
Instructor:	I understand. For this plan of action, we'll be splitting into 3 groups! First off Group A, in charge of taking out the control towers. No.4, No.22, you two will be acting with the Resistance.
No.4:	Understood.
No.22:	Understood!

Instructor: Next up. Group B, in charge of getting out the aircraft. Right here, in order to carve a path through the enemies, led by Scanner No.21, Attackers No.3 and No.6 will cut through them. Can you do it?

No.3: I need tough jobs like this to get fired up!

No.6: It's different for me though.

Instructor: Finally, Group C which will be backup. No.9, who will stand back and have all the YoRHa unit data backed up, will travel to the aircraft warehouse after.
I will manage the plan through transmissions alongside...Defender No.2.
That is all. Now, last of all, from the Captain of the Resistance...a word of advice.

Cactus: Huh?

Instructor: Just earlier, when he was making everyone laugh, it was to lower the tension.
You really are...a fine Captain.

(Cactus takes Black's place, in front of everyone.)

Cactus: This mission we're going on today.
The success relies on all of us.
Even if we manage to complete the mission,
more than that... (Long silence)
We have to... We have to!! Survive this!!

Every last one of us is going home!!

Everyone Yeah!!

(Everyone is pumped up by Cactus words.
They all go in their respective groups.
No.9 takes the time to tie No.2's bandage before leaving. No.2 was about to follow him but his SS notices him of something...)

No.2: What is it?

```
-Warning-
-Since the operation
was assigned, 4 hours
have elapsed-
```

No.2: It hasn't become a relevant situation.
Requesting postponement —

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-Request to postpone denied-
-Recommended action: As soon
as possible eliminate
the YoRHa M Unit-
```

No.2: Understood...



Chapter 8 [The offensive]

(Group A)

No.4: First, eliminate the enemies guarding the tower.

No.22: Understood! The enemy has noticed us!

(Enemies appear from every side)

Phlox: Watch out!

No.22: The enemy's aiming at us! We aren't going to make up!

No.4: Calm down! Listen closely and take in any provided data of the enemy's firing patterns.
Then just shoot by intuition!

Lotus: Intuition!?

No.22: Understood!!

Lotus: "Intuition," he says...

Phlox: Captain, let's do this!

Cactus: Huh?

Phlox: This might be our final mission. We can't let the enemy surround us!
So we should first go and surround the enemy!

No.4: It's too dangerous!

No.22: There's one approaching!

(They fight for a while, the Resistance members seem lost but the M Unit is killing countless machine lifeforms)

Cactus: We don't have the fighting strength!

Phlox: We can't do anything if we keep thinking that way.
Besides that, we have our hidden weapon! Right? Captain!!

(The encouraging words of Phlox unfreeze Cactus, he finally gets up and go into the fight.
Lotus stays behind, analyzing the battle from his tablet.)

No.22: You'll be okay...right?

Lotus: It'll be fine! Just earlier, the Captain and Phlox attached to their arms a virus that can damage machine lifeforms. If a machine gets hit by it, it'll slowly get infected.
So if we can manage to hit all the enemies, they'll destroy themselves!

No.4: I see. The arm, huh... Using anything you can lay your hands on... can't you differentiate between allies and enemies?

Lotus: Ah... Ah!

Cactus: Stop!! Stop!! STOP IT!!

Phlox:	LOTUS!!
Lotus:	I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!
No.4:	Without delay, destroy them all!
No.22:	Yes sir!
	(Group B)
No.3:	Rargh, so you're over here! C'mere bastards! (Fighting machines) So it's just weaklings!
No.6:	Ah, that way you keep yapping while swinging your arms around, it's really vulgar, so can't you stop?
No.3:	Shut the fuck up.
	(They both kill enemies)
No.6:	Heey, No.21! Where to next?
No.21:	There's four groups to the North. A big one's coming.
No.6:	You hear that, No.3?
No.3:	Yeah, I heard!! And also, I told you to speak to me formally!!
No.6:	Maybe I will after this battle, if you're actually still alive!
	(Group C)
	"Instructor. It's No.4 from Group A. We've destroyed one of the enemy control towers. Flying enemies are starting to fall."
Instructor:	Good. Begin heading towards the aircraft warehouse.
	"Understood"
No.9:	Instructor! We should head over too! It's not the time to be twiddling our thumbs!
Instructor:	NO.9! (He has shouted so violently, No.9 is afraid to reply.)
No.9:	...yes?
	(After a long silence...)
Instructor:	Be careful.
	(Another silence...)
	"Instructor. It's No.21 from Group B. We've arrived, but there's more enemies than expected. As soon as we start up the aircraft, we'll leave. Please come immediately!"
Instructor:	Understood.

	(Group B – They're fighting machines)
No.3:	Go, No.21!!
	(He goes to the control panel)
No.21:	Wait a second! If we enter the key here, we should be able to activate the aircraft!
	(No.21 gets hurt by something, he screams)
No.3:	Hey, what happened!
No.21:	Ah... this is—the enemy's logic virus!! It's a trap!
	(Once again, they fight the endless flow of enemies)
No.6:	Does that make this plan a failure? Laughable, huh!
No.21:	No! Not yet!!
No.3:	Hey you! Hey, No.21!!
No.21:	I've overridden the control! Let's go!
No.3:	I got it! (Beeping noise) What is it this time!?
No.6:	The enemy! With the alarm going off, they're all headed here!
No.3:	Damn it!
	(Group A arrives in the room)
Phlox:	Quickly, get inside!!
Lotus:	Go go go!
No.4:	Hurry up, idiot! (He pushes Lotus) The situation?
No.3:	Aah we gained control, but enemies are on their way! No.21 also got hit by a counterattack!
No.4:	No.22, take fire! Don't let the enemy approach!
No.22:	Yes! (They fight again)
	(Group C arrives in the room, everyone is finally reunited)
No.22:	Instructor!
No.4:	Instructor, I'll leave this to you! Hey No.6! Get to attacking!
No.6:	Don't tell me what to do!
No.9:	No.21!?
No.21:	I'm okay!
	(Black walks to the controls of the aircraft)
Instructor:	We're taking off! Everyone, hold on!
No.9:	Yes! Hold on!

(2 hours later) Aboard the Aircraft, No.2 is getting notified by his SS. He keeps staring at it, letting it ring until No.9 enters the room. He then immediately close the notification.)

No.9: No.2. What's wrong?

No.2: No... It's nothing.

No.9: How's your wrist? Does it still hurt?

No.2: Wrist? Oh, I forgot about it. It seems fine now.

No.9: That's a relief...

No.2: Instead of a wound like this, it'd be better to go check up on everyone else.

No.9: Everyone else has already been checked on. No.21, who took the most damage, is now recovering. Right now, the Instructor's watching him.

No.2: I see.

No.9: Are you really... feeling OK No.2?

No.2: Hey, No.9. If this war ended... what would you want to do?

No.9: If the war ends? This war that's been going for how long now?

No.2: I said, "what if".

No.9: Let's see... First of all... I'd like to travel to various places!

No.2: Traveling?

No.9: I mean, we've been sent to various places already... but isn't it always just constant fighting? So that's why...I'd love to go somewhere much prettier. Something like that. For example! The islands to the south, or... the pure red mountain country! And the remnants of the Old World mankind left behind! I'd sure love to see it... Hey, No.2, look! You can see the ocean down there... It's so beautiful... Someday...I'd love to relax and read a book in a place like that.

No.2: That...would be nice. (He slowly getting closer to No.9's back, drawing his sword...)

(On one side: Instructor, the Resistance's members, No.4, No.22.
On the other: No.3, No.6, No.21)

Instructor: What's the meaning of this, No.21!?

No.21: I'll say it again. We aren't headed back to the base camp.

Instructor: What is the meaning of this?

No.21: Us of the YoRHa Experimental M Unit are an improved version of the already completed Female Type YoRHa Model. Meant to achieve magnificent accomplishments wherever we're sent. And lead Mankind to victory! ...That's what this unit was said to be. But in reality, we just meet defeat on every battlefield and our spirits are taken from us. No matter what we tried, we could never win.
That also should have been the case...Because our losses were all part of their plan.

No.4: What are you saying?

No.3: It's exactly what he said! For the YoRHa Male models to keep getting taken down like this. This was all just an experimental study! Being sent to these un-winnable battles!

Instructor: To me, it's different! Headquarters has expectations from us, for a newly developed unit like us to find a way to change the war situation—!

No.21: (Laughing) It's all the same, Instructor. It's the same. Because we're a unit of immortal soldiers, we can be shipped out to dangerous battlefields to be destroyed and then just be brought back. Until that day we can win... we'll just continue to be murdered like guinea pigs!
The mission we were given... Instructor. I'm thankful to you.
Even though it's rude, I hacked and read your received messages.
For the sake of protecting us, who were getting unreasonable missions.
How many times you had sent written protests to Headquarters.
It would be fine to come together with us! Instructor.

Instructor: That's not something I can do.

No.3: No.4! You should come with us!

No.4: Even if I did, what then? There's nowhere we could go!

No.6: There's a hidden place on the other side of Earth. The trade city of night.
If we went there, we could at least avoid being located by Headquarters' bunker!
And besides that... We're the latest development in battle androids!
There's no one we who can beat us!

Instructor: Saying something like that... it's unforgivable!

No.21: Instructor I didn't ask for your opinion. To cut things short, this is a coup d'état.
Let's go together. No.22!

(No.9 enters the room in a hurry.)

No.9: Everyone! No.21? What's wrong? What happened?

No.21: Good timing, No.9. Right now, we're headed to the other side of the Earth.

No.9: Eh? That's, what do you—

No.21: Sorry about this, but you'll be coming with us.
Because without a Healer like you, we can't back up our data!

(No.6 takes No.9 hostage)

No.6: You're giving off quite a nice scent, No.9~

No.4: Let go of No.9!

No.3: Drop your gun, No.4! In this situation, a Gunner can't defeat an Attacker!

No.21: No.2. Sooner or later, we were going to have to fight. I already know everything.
The fact that you're just here to kill us all!

No.9: Eh...

(Both groups start to fight each other.)

-The airlock has been released. Atmospheric pressure has changed. Taking automatic action-

(They stop for a bit, only to resume the fight.)

Cactus: Lotus! I'll leave that side to you!

Lotus: Okay! No.4-san!

No.3: You're not half bad!

No.9: No.2, please stop! (He rushes into the fight without any weapon.)

No.3: No.4 you bastard, face me!

No.6: You know actually, taking hostages and stuff, I just love fights where you play dirty!

Instructor: Stop right now!!

(An explosion occurs, everyone falls to the ground.)

-Pressure gauge has reached limit-
-Repair System charged at 15%-
-Recommended Action:
Immediate evacuation-

Cactus: Lotus!!

(The Resistance's members try to prevent the crash while everyone else is still fighting.)

-Distance to crash
-120 Meters-
-110 Meters-
-100 Meters-
-80 Meters-
-60 Meters-
-40 Meters-
-20 Meters-



Chapter 9 [The aftermath]

(Woodland Area | Landing Spot)

(No.9 wakes up, his arm seems dislocated. He repairs himself and screams in pain.)

No.22: No.9!

No.9: This is... Somewhere... Seems me landed in some kind of forested area...but...
I don't know our exact location...

No.22: Where's everyone else?

No.9: I don't know. Maybe we all got thrown out during the emergency landing.

(No.21 approaches, he's staggering and end up falling to the ground.)

No.22: No.21!

No.9: Wait!

(No.21 sparkles and tries to get up.)

No.21: It doesn't hurt at all. But everything looks...kind of red. Who even cares anymore?

No.22: Hey...what's wrong, No.21?

No.9: No.22! That's... That's...

No.21: Hey! You... Who were you again?

No.22: He's been infected by the enemy logic virus!

(A soon as he ears this, No.21 starts to laugh hysterically.)

No.9: No.22... We should leave. No.22! ...No.22!!

(Woodland Area| 1800m Northwest from Landing Spot)

No.4: No.3... You... You've been infected... Since when!

No.3: Who knows. When No.21 hacked into the aircraft, he got hit by the logic virus.
And after that, it sent out some weird noise. Maybe it happened then.

No.4: Then... Since No.6 was with you, was he hit too? I don't care about the coup d'état anymore.
Compared to that, the logic virus is much more serious!
Quickly, shut down your black box and cut your power source! If you leave it alone,
your whole mind will be corrupted and there won't be any going back!

No.3: Like I give a shit! I just wanted to be alone with you! No.4. Just with you!
(He removes his blindfold.) You've always avoided being with me! When you were an
Attacker, and then as a Gunner! I always waited for a chance! Honestly, you were a way
better Attacker than I was. But when you saw my specialty was also as an Attacker...
You gave it up.

No.4:	It was for the sake of better efficiency!
No.3:	No it wasn't! You gave it to me—Out of pity! That... Doing that!! Do you know how much you put me through? How do you think it felt for me who wanted to become your equal?
No.4:	That's enough, No.3!
No.3:	But right now, I don't feel bad at all! My body feels lighter than it ever has!
No.4:	That's the logic virus damaging your senses. It's broken your strength limiter and your losing grip on your body. If this continues, your entire system will be destroyed!
No.3:	It's fine, No.4! It's fine! There's no denying I've become closer to being your equal. After that, I won't need anything else!! At least in my final moments—! I'm gonna surpass you!
No.4:	...You idiot!

	(Woodland Area) 900m Southeast from Landing Spot)
Instructor:	We're surrounded!
Phlox:	It's a dead end! We can't go any farther!
Lotus:	Everyone's here, huh.
Cactus:	Help us...Help us!
Instructor:	At this rate—! (No.6 appears.) No.6!
No.6:	I'm feeling sooo good! To run into the Instructor like this~
Instructor:	No.6...! You... The logic virus has infected your—
No.6:	Who cares about something like that? That's because starting right now, I'm going to kill every last one of you!
	(He unleashes a powerful attack. With one swing of his blade, he hits the entire group with a devastating shock wave.)
Instructor:	Stop this, No.6!!
No.6:	Stop? Hey~ With the YoRHa M Unit falling apart right now, is this really the time for such nonsense?
	(No.6 uses his shock wave attack once again.)
Cactus:	Why!? If you were just gonna kill us, why did you first save us?
No.6:	Eh? (He laughs while getting really close to Cactus) I see, so you don't get it, huh? It just made me look forward to this more!
	(He thrusts his sword in Phlox's chest.)
Instructor:	No.6!!!

No.6:	It hurts, doesn't it!? With the last of your conscious, all the damage you've taken is attacking you all at once. Y'know, to tell the truth... seeing people suffering, or crying in pain... I love it so much I can't take it! And best of all...looking down on them from above! And that look of despair after running out of strength! That exact expression is what I long to see!! Think a machine lifeform could give me that? WHAT A WASTE!! It's such a waste...
Instructor:	As If I'd let you... do something like that!!
	(The instructor and No.6 fight. Instructor quickly loses.)
No.6:	Instructor? I know it all~ You're body isn't even a YoRHa model. You're just a regular android given this position!! The proof of being a YoRHa, the oppressive weight of the black box— Whether you have one or not... It really makes a biiiiiig difference!
	(In a last effort, Phlox gets up and fire at No.6.)
No.6:	Oh geez. To aim at a YoRHa model like me? There's no way a Resistance member like you could win!
Lotus:	FIRE!!!
	(No.6 uses his sword to block those bullets.)
No.6:	Hacking and using the machine lifeforms, IT REALLY HURTS!! You really try some nice things!
Lotus:	To knock back all those bullets...!
No.6:	That's not true. I think a couple might've hit me! (He slashes Lotus with his sword.) Hey. Get up. I still haven't killed you yet! For you to leave a scrape on my face! I wonder what kind of pain would suit you!
	(No.6 is pushing Lotus while he tries to evade. Lotus is scrawling on the ground.)
No.6:	For example... What if I cut off both of your arms!? Or maybe... ll be more fun to slice 1000 cuts into you one by one!!
	(Lotus is screaming in pain.)
Cactus:	LOTUS!!!!
	(Before Cactus is able to fire, No.6 pushes him to the ground.)
No.6:	I'm leaving you for later! Since you don't seem nearly as interesting.
Cactus:	I... I'm... THEIR ONLY CAPTAIN!!
	(Cactus rushes behind No.6, hitting him with his fists. No.6 doesn't even react at first.)
No.6:	You're so annoying! (He pushes Cactus once again.)
Cactus:	I... I...!! Huh? ...It doesn't hurt. Everything looks...r-r...red...eh? Huh...? My arm...!
	(Cactus's arm moves on its own, Cactus finds that very funny.)
Phlox:	It can't be... Captain...!

No.6: What's up old man, did you get infected? That's so lame. That's just so pathetic!

(Cactus takes his gun and fire in all directions while laughing hysterically. He ends up shooting Lotus's head, killing him instantly. Phlox also gets shot in the chest.)

Phlox: It can't be... Captain... (He falls to the ground, dead.)

(In some ways, Cactus is able to realize what he just did. He slowly raises his gun to his head and kills himself while smiling in a disturbing way.)

No.6: Look! Did you see that!?
That guy...he dragged all his own friends with him and died on his own!
That's soooo convenient. Like a cleaning machine!
(He laughs and laughs and then, suddenly stops.)
But... I still haven't gotten to kill a single thing. And now... you're the only one left.
Instructor~! If you would please...Let me enjoy this!

(Woodland Area| 1200m Northeast from Landing Spot)

(No.2 wakes up to the song of his SS ringing.)

```
-Warning-
-Time elapsed since start of the operation order-
-8 hours and 30 minutes-
-Recommended Action:-
-Quickly eliminate the YoRHa M Unit-
```

No.2: In a situation like this... how can you say that...

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-Warning-
-This is an absolute command from headquarters-
-In the case of disobedience, No.2 Type E's black box will be set to go
berserk, and he will be disposed of-
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No.2: Huh?

```
-Recommended Action: As soon as possible-
-Eliminate the YoRHa M Unit-
```

No.2: How much more are you going to twist me like this? Headquarters!!

(A bit further from him, No.3 and No.4 are still fighting. They seem totally exhausted.)

No.3: You still haven't gotten serious, have you? No.4!!

No.4: You're seriously a real idiot! (He activates his sword.) No.3!

No.3: So you're finally showing it! I'm so sick of it!

(They fight once again. Slowly No.4 seems to take the advantage.
No.3 is crawling on the floor, he has lost his sword.)

No.3: No.4!

No.4:	Why didn't you infect me with the virus!? Since you have it, you should have been able to! With every single attack, you had plenty of chances!
No.3:	Even if I beat you by doing that! It wouldn't have any meaning!
No.4:	I guess that's true. (He places his blade on No.3's throat.)
No.3:	Please.... (No.4 kills him.)
	--
	(No.22 and No.9 are running away together, trying to distance themselves from No.21.)
No.21:	I'm feeling good!! I feel so good, No.9!!
	(No.22 shoots him. No.9 goes check on No.21's lifeless body.)
No.22:	I'm sorry... I'm sorry...
No.21:	(Raising up) Something like that won't hurt me... It doesn't hurt, No.22! That's right, No.22... Your name was No.22, wasn't it! The twin model who was created together with me! And yet, why is it even though you were meant to be an Attacker, now you're a gunner, it's so pathetic No.22. To tell the truth... I've always felt sorry for you. You were so weak...and if I didn't protect you... you'd die! Crybaby No.22!
No.9:	No.22, don't listen! That's...not No.21 anymore! He's been overtaken by the virus—
	(No.22 shoots No.21 countless times.)
No.9:	The erosion has reached his head, ceasing proper function.
	(No.21 gets up one last time, removing his blindfold at the same time.)
No.21:	22.... 22!!!!! (No.9 decides to attack No.21, but gets hurt.)
No.21:	Hey. Let's be together. Won't you come with me?
No.9:	NO.21!!!
No.22:	No.9!
No.9:	Be careful...No.21 is...being controlled by the virus!
	(Together, No.9 and No.22 are able to push No.21 to his limits. He doesn't seem able to move anymore.)
No.22:	(He slowly gets closer to No.21, without any weapon in his hand.) Help me... Something like this...
No.9:	He's starting...to recover...
	(No.21 once again raises from the dead, making monstrous faces.)
No.9:	GET AWAY!!
	(No.22 is severely injured by No.21's attack.)
No.9:	He's starting to...learn from the machine life forms...

No.21: Huh? No.22!
(He seems to be searching for No.22 who is only a few meters away from him)
He disappeared... I'm so lonely... I'm so lonely...! (He's crying.)

No.22: No.9... Run away.

No.9: No! My job is to protect everyone.

No.21: 22...

No.9: That's why... I'd never do something like run away!

(No.9 rushes toward No.21.)

No.22: No.9!! No.9! (No.9 gets badly injured too.)

(No.2 arrives and prevents No.9 from being killed.)

No.9: No.2...!

(No.6 and Instructor are still fighting.)

No.6: Do you get it? Y'know, for me... Things like thiiiis—is what I love!
Instructor! Instructor!! Instructor?

(After being hit multiple times, Instructor is able to thrust his sword into No.6 chest.)

No.6: Hey~ Instructor! Something like this isn't gonna work!

Instructor: SS... Begin scan.

No.6: What... did you... (He seems surprised, he's staggering)

Instructor: Using you as the medium... I activated SS's body scan.

No.6: My body... is...!

Instructor: Sorry about that. The reprogramming took some time.
I tweaked it a bit, setting it so that it'll send your black box out of control.

`-Until loss of control: 23 seconds remaining-`

No.6: If you do that, I'll (he's speak incoherently.)

`-Until loss of control: 15 seconds remaining-`

Instructor: No need to worry. It's my job to take care of you. So I'll look after you, right until the end.

`-Until loss of control: 3 seconds remaining-`

No.6: Stop it stop it stop it stop it—STOP IT—!!

(Back to No.2, No.9, No.21, and No.22.)

No.9: No.2?

No.2: No.9. I have a question for you.

No.9: No.21 has—

No.2: If...I was turned into an enemy... and went crazy...

No.9: Did the enemy virus—

No.2: If... I turned into your enemy...

No.21: NO.2!!

(No.2 fights wonderfully well.)

No.21: It hurts!! It hurts!!

No.2: No.9. If I ended up going crazy, would you...kill me?

No.9: ...Something like that...You...To kill you...I could... never.
No matter what. I'd find a way... to save you.

No.2: That's good to hear. You saying something like that... It's what I expected.
You... The kindhearted person you are... Please stay that way...

No.21: Kill... I'll kill you!!

(No.21 and No.2 are fighting once again)

No.21: It hurts!!

No.22: Stop it, No.2! The virus No.21's holding—

No.9: It'll be okay! No.2's a Type D so he should have resistance to viruses!
(No.21 hits No.2 with a powerful melee attack.) NO.2!!

No.21: Don't get in my way, No.2!

(No.2 penetrate No.21, finally killing him. At the last moment before his death,
No.21 looks at No.22 with a happy, friendly smile on his face.)

No.9: Watch out! (No.21 explodes.)

No.22: No.21! No.21! (Rushing to his partner's body.)

No.9: No.2!

No.2: Don't get near me! You can't... get close...

No.9: Those effects... That can't... That's impossible.
Since No.2's a Type D model, no matter what virus... you should have resistance... No.2?

No.2: No.9 is naive, huh? To believe someone's words... so earnestly like that...
My official model name is, No.2. Type E.
Specifically designed for when YoRHa units turn their back on headquarters...
An Executioner model! Made with the sole purpose of killing all of you.
I'm just an assassin!

No.9: What are you saying, No.2?

No.2: No.9!! To tell the truth, I've always been jealous of you.
Instead of defeating enemies... You were made to save your friends.
So straightforward...So honest...And pure...But you...
Even towards me, who since birth was only taught how to kill...
(He looks at the bandage on his wrist.)
Towards me, someone who had to live by lying. When I was with you...!
My soul felt... like it could be saved...

No.9: SS, what's No.2's black box's process status and the state of his virus?

-Impossible-
-The rate of virus corruption has already reached 70%-
-The loss of the processor and total virus corruption has already been calculated-

No.9: SHUT UP SHUT UP!!

-No.2's black box corrosion has reached 78%-
-With the loss of control, most recommended action is the swift and immediate destruction of YoRHa Unit No.2 Type E-

(No.9 screams furiously, breaking the SS with his own sword.)

No.2: It can't be helped that No.9 is an honest idiot...But still...
For you to feel that way for my sake... It makes me so happy.

No.9: No.2! I won't let you die.

(No.9 crawls in direction of No.2. No.22 aims his gun at No.2.)

No.2: I'm leaving No.9 to you! No.22!!

(He kills himself with his own sword. He falls to his knees, look up at No.9 one last time.)

No.2: Goodbye... No.9...

(Back to Cactus. He's walking in a circle, his arm still moving on its own. No.4 arrives, drawing his sword.)

Cactus: N-n-no, you got it wrong! This isn't the virus, I just fell so it's been damaged.
Like these guys...I just dragged them with me here!

No.4: Why would you do something like that...

Cactus: With the virus attack, I was in a pinch. For a coward...there's only a cowards way of fighting.

No.4: I see.

Cactus: And that partner of yours... Where's No.3? (Long silence) I see...
It seems we've survived. The two of us.

No.4: Yeah.

(Again a long silence, only interrupted by No.4's SS)

60: From the bunker to the YoRHa M Unit. Can you hear me?

No.4: This is the YoRHa M Unit. Gunner No.4... I hear you.

6O: Ah, that's good. Right now we're preparing a rescue team.
We were unable to make contact with the M Unit's Instructor. Ah, 2B-san!
We've made contact with the M Unit!

2B: Understood. We're currently organizing the rescue mission.
M Unit No.4, do you hear me?

No.4: I hear you.

2B: This is YoRHa Unit No.2 Type B.
At this time, the rescue team is on its way.
I will transfer over the situation data.

No.4: No.2...Type B...?

2B: Type B is a new model, recently implemented.
Bearing the functions of both an Attacker and a Gunner.
It's likely that your units may also switch to this type later.

No.4: I get it now... So both of us... were actually failed models all this time.

2B: M Unit No.4. Report your current situation.
I'll repeat. M Unit No.4. Please your situation.

(No.9 and No.22 are still walking together.)

No.22: Someone sent a distress signal. This is...from our Unit.

No.9: So there still is...another survivor... Besides us...
(No.9 is crying.) No.2...SS... Delete all of No.2's data.

No.22: No.9...

No.9: I'm fine...with this...

-Data cannot be deleted-

No.9: It can't?

-For the sake of reporting to the Council of Humanity, all experimental data cannot be deleted without the permission of the Bunker Commander-

-Results were as predicted. Mix of using Attacker, Gunner, and Healer together: This unit was used during the development phase to come to a decision-

-Upon comparing the male YoRHa models to the female YoRHa models-
-While the level of strength has a higher capacity-
-Since there is a lack of security in ability to systematically cooperate the battle models to be manufactured will be females only-
-The experimental M Unit will be the final test, and last unit-

No.9: The...last...?

-Starting now, all YoRHa male models will be designated as Scanner types

-Before all data has been analyzed, the E model's return to the Bunker is forbidden-

-That is all-

No.9: So... in the end, we were all simply guinea pigs.
And No.2... having to go through that all by himself...

-Accessing... Stored info... Accessing... YoRHa Unit M Unit-
-No.2 Type E. Restoring recorded audio data-
-Hey... No.9-
-If you're hearing this...I'm glad-
-All this time, I've been lying to you-
-And in exchange for that... I'll probably give up my life-
But... I don't feel lonely at all.
I've always been questioning... while repeatedly living and dying…
If we had souls...where would they be?
Souls...?
No.9.
My backup data...it should still be inside of you.
I'd like you to delete that data.
Even if you don't do it... I'm sure that someday…
I'll see you again.
So until then…
This is farewell.
Goodbye.

No.9: No.2...



At the end YoRHa,

the YoRHa Experimental
M Unit's final experiment
came to a close.

I'm sure... someday...
We'll meet again No.2.

Memory Cage

Translation by /u/ilfans

Chapter 1

As if cutting through a cloud of dust, a close-range weapon flashes. The Type-40 Sword — a state-of-the-art saber granted to those elite fighters on the front lines. Lightning bursts from the blade, its hemispherical body flying in an arc.

A now headless machine lifeform ceases movement, its cylindrical body lying motionless in the sand, before exploding moments later. The debris caught up in the explosion rain down on the surrounding area as nothing more than hunks of metal.

Once the explosion clears, all that remains is the sound of the desert wind.

As the clouds of sand fade from the air, a figure appears. The figure can be easily recognized as an adult woman; her soft curves and slender body, as well as her beautiful legs extending from the hem of her skirt, give her away in an instant.

Though in actuality, she is neither an "adult" nor a "woman". The owner of the said figure isn't even a human, nor does she have a sex, in a biological sense. She is a YoRHa model android, No.2 Type B, or more commonly known as 2B, specializing in combat.

On this Earth, humans are already long gone. Due to the invasion of aliens, humans were forced to escape to the moon. The planet is now a battleground for the machine lifeforms created by those aliens, and the androids who are tasked with their annihilation.

Sheathing her sword, 2B directs her attention behind herself as she speaks.

"Is that all of them?"

In response to her question, an object floating around two meters above the ground lowers itself. It's a tactical support unit known as a pod. With a rectangular head and four arms of various sizes, it mainly moves about through the air, however, water deployment is also possible. Equipped with long-range attacks, situational analysis, transmission capabilities, as well as first aid equipment and so on, it has every function necessary to assist YoRHa androids.

"Affirmative: No enemies detected within five kilometers of the access point."

"I see," 2B mutters, as she steps up to a large metallic box, which only happens to be slightly taller than her. The access point, which is disguised as a relic of human civilization known as a "vending machine", is an important facility for conducting communications with the Bunker and checking information on the surrounding area.

Whether they're aware of that or not, machine lifeforms tend to find and gather around access points. From the corners of ruins to the middle of the desert, it doesn't matter. They swarm like bugs to fallen fruit.

Consequently, when YoRHa members send and receive mail to Earth, or need to obtain information on the surrounding topography, they must first get rid of the machine lifeforms gathering at the access point. It has already become a normal routine for them.

Now, having completed the usual procedure, 2B is able to fulfill her original goal. She selects the latest message from her list of mail and opens it. However, just as her line of sight makes out the name of the sender and the words "top secret", she hears him.

"2B!"

The sudden surprise is caused by 9S, No.9 Type S. While he's also a YoRHa member, unlike 2B, he's not built with the appearance of an adult female, but rather his appearance mimics that of a human boy.

"Is that a message from the Commander?"

While he may not have been able to catch a glimpse of the message, Scanner models specialize in investigative purposes and have high intuition and observational skills. Since it wasn't the usual time for communication to

arrive from the Council of Humanity, and reading personal e-mails directly before commencing an operation is highly unlikely, he'd come to the conclusion that it must be a message from the Commander.

"No, it has nothing to do with the current investigation. It's instructions for another assignment. More importantly," she says, in an attempt to change the subject,
"this wasn't our rendezvous point."

The chosen rendezvous point was a location closer to their destination.

"Well, yeah, but you looked like you were in the middle of a battle, so ...
I thought I'd come to support you."

"That's unnecessary."

If she weren't even capable of dispatching of a few machine lifeforms alone, she'd be defective as a B-type model, after all.

"Yeah, looks like it," 9S responds, with an exaggerated shrug.
"Well, we managed to rendezvous safely, so why don't we head towards the target area?"

The coordinates in the map data update from the previous rendezvous point to their target destination, and 2B and 9S begin moving.

Chapter 2

"Gah! There's sand in my shoes again!"

While walking through the desert, 9S gets the strange feeling that his shoes are flooding with water, but it turns out it's sand, instead. It's a perfectly natural thing, which 2B doesn't believe is something to shout about, but that doesn't seem to be the case for 9S. They walk a few meters, he frowns, they walk a few more, and he's shouting again. And it repeats just like that.

"Doesn't it bother you?"

"Doesn't what bother me?"

"The sand! Aren't your shoes full of it, 2B?"

"They are, and while it's an odd feeling, it isn't causing any hindrance to my movement."

The sand in the air is causing poor visibility, but the sand in her shoes can hardly be recognized as a problem. And with that dismissal, 9S's shoulders blatantly drop.

"It's not movement that's the problem, it's the way it feels!
Don't you hate the way it just sloshes around in your shoes like that?"

"Feelings are prohibited."

How many times has she had to repeat that phrase to him, she wonders? This isn't the first-time bunker paired her with 9S for a mission.

"Yeah, yeah."

9S replies roughly the same way every time, with that pouty tone and facial expression. Well, actually, in the beginning it was more of a 'sorry', with him huddling in on himself instead.

2B had heard that the reason YoRHa members were encouraged not to have emotions was because of a group of them who failed their mission because of them. Of course, emotions cause fluctuations in judgment and behavior, so she believes it's unnecessary for them to have them anyway. ... Herself, in particular.

"Hey! Is that it?"

In the direction of 9S's pointing, the shadow of a building-like shape suddenly emerges. Well, it's not exactly 'sudden', as its location was already properly displayed in the map data, but due to the sandstorm and uneven terrain, 2B wasn't able to see it until now.

"Affirmative: That is the target of investigation. A large structure left over from human civilization."

The pod responds from beside her. However, it's not the pod assigned to 2B, Pod 042, but rather the pod that had been assigned to 9S, Pod 153. Unless specifically spoken to or deemed necessary, pods won't answer questions posed by anyone other than those they directly support.

Suddenly, the wind quiets down, and visibility improves. From the shadow, which was originally blurred by sand clouds, a large arch comes into view. 2B can see that the building had been built within the side of a hollowed out mountain, partially facing a nearby valley. Overall, it has a strange architectural style.

"Looks like it's the structure known as a temple, some sort of religious facility. I think its formal name was the "Barren Temple". It started out as a place of residence, but humans later began using it as a temple instead, or ... something like that!"

2B can hear the liveliness in 9S's voice as he says that. S-type models are characterized by their research and information gathering abilities, so they tend to hold a great deal of interest in just about everything.

"Come on, let's go, 2B!"

He speaks in a tone that suggests waiting isn't an option, as he breaks into a run, kicking up sand in his wake. It's like he's totally different from the boy who was whining about sand just moments ago. No doubt, these are his emotions at work.
Watching this, a smile begins to tug at 2B's lips, but she's quick to suppress it.

"Emotions ... are forbidden ..."

She'd only meant to think those words, but they slipped out of her mouth before she'd realized it. At that, 9S turns back to look at her as he shouts.

"Did you say something?"

"It's nothing," is her response, as she, too, begins heading towards the building known as the Barren Temple.

Chapter 3

The interior of the temple is so quiet, it feels like sound itself has disappeared. The wind, which had so incessantly rung in the pair's ears not long ago, now sounds as though it's been muffled by a thick wall.

"Huh. It almost feels like this place has air conditioning."

Pod 153 promptly responds to 9S's statement.

"Negative: No air conditioning equipment detected within the structure.
The current perception of temperature is merely being caused by the difference between the interior and exterior temperatures."

"Oh, for the love of ... Yeah, I know. That's just how it felt."

9S's words come out in a sulking tone, as he hustles through a small passageway. 2B follows close behind, remaining vigilant of her surroundings.

The sound of the duo's footsteps echoes and overlaps with the sound of their pods' low humming. Suddenly, a portion of the ceiling collapses, creating a place from which light can shine into the area. Thanks to that, the surrounding area becomes a little more visible, and the two are able to make out rectangular stones, systematically placed throughout the staircase and landing.

"Man, did sand seriously get this far into the temple?"

9S peers over the railing of the staircase, looking down at the area below, which happens to be completely buried in sand. It's not just the ground, but even the walls are covered, like the sand had formed itself into small mountains.

"Hypothesis: The accumulated sand within the passageway was placed artificially,
however date and purpose of placement are unknown."

"Artificially? You mean they made it flow all the way in here themselves? Like a river or something?"

"Affirmative. It is conveniently referred to as artificial quicksand."

"I wonder why they'd do such a thing. You said the purpose was unknown, right?"

"Affirmative."

There are still so many mysteries surrounding the old world. Mankind may have escaped to the moon, however that doesn't mean they were able to bring all of their information with them. That's why androids continue to conduct investigations for recording and preservation purposes.

"Are there any machine lifeforms nearby?"

Despite not receiving any indication that enemies are in the area herself, 2B poses the question to Pod 042. It's better to be careful in situations like this.

"Analysis: Scans indicate no enemy presence within the temple."

That means that even if, in a fit of curiosity, 9S were to do something rash, he wouldn't place himself in immediate danger. Although, there are machine lifeforms capable of jamming radio waves, so it can't be said for certain whether the area is safe just yet.

"Alert: Damage detected in the floor and staircase ahead."

9S laughs at Pod 153's advice.

"I know that even without your warning. Right, 2B?"

2B merely nods, as she notices a huge stone blocking the descending staircase which leads further into the building.

"This rock looks like it was a part of the ceiling. It's a bit damaged,
but you can still make out the patterns on it."

Kneeling, 9S investigates the large stone before them, before turning his gaze upwards, 2B following suit moments later. The two of them notice the dazzling blue sky above, peeking in from the hole in the ceiling.

"I wonder what caused it to collapse like that."

At the very least, it doesn't appear to be due to machine lifeforms. The purpose of androids is to return the Earth to its rightful owners, humans, and if possible, in a condition as close as possible to how they left it. Therefore, it's best to avoid engaging with machine lifeforms to keep from destroying the ruins further.

Thus, it's difficult to believe there would have been a fight in this vicinity. If an android were to encounter an enemy here, they would most likely have led it to a more open location, away from the ruins.

"Analysis: The collapse appears to have occurred thousands of years ago.
Therefore, it is impossible to identify the cause."

"Whoa, thousands of years, huh? That's amazing!"

"Amazing?"

"Yeah! I mean, if the ceiling here collapsed thousands of years ago, then that means this whole place must've been built much earlier than that. I can't believe it's in such good condition. Since the desert climate's harsh and all, a stone building like this should be way more weathered than it is."

9S practically says all of that in one breath, but once he's finished, he gets to his feet, and begins making his way to the room to the side of the staircase, almost as though he's being called to it.

"Now what?" 2B asks, in mild amazement.

9S keeps his eyes fixed on the half-open door to the room.

"How do you think this door opened and closed? I mean, this is stone, right? And look at how thick it is. There's no way an average human could've moved something this heavy."

The door is made up of a pair of sliding doors, but there's no signs of movement by either pushing or pulling on them. 9S eagerly tilts his head.

"Do you think there's a power source for it somewhere?"

9S peers inside the room. However, unlike the passage they're in now, which has natural light pouring into it, the inside of the room is nothing but darkness. Pod 153 moves around to the front of 9S, just as he's about to carelessly step foot into the dark room.

"Proposal: Light function should be utilized."

"Got it. Go ahead and activate it."

"Affirmative."

With that, Pod 153 lights the area, covering quite a wide portion of the room. Though when 9S, accompanied by Pod 153, makes his way further in, the entrance becomes dark again as a result. 2B follows suit, having her own pod activates its light as she steps into the room.

9S peers up at the ceiling, before breaking into a run, moving his eyes toward the walls next as he does. His footsteps echo throughout the room, as he continuously stops to investigate the stones paving the floor below him. 2B feels as though her head is spinning just watching his behavior.

"The floors, the wall, even the ceiling — everything's made of stone! They cut out huge slabs of it, arranged them, and lined them up accordingly ... It's totally unlike any architectural styles I've seen before! What kind of machinery did they use? How did they manage to transport all this stone? And how is this single pillar managing to maintain the whole thing intact?"

9S can't help but speak with excitement in his voice, as he runs up to a portion of the wall.

"I think they might've used this area for lighting. On this elongated stand, here."

"Affirmative: There are traces which indicate a light fixture known as a "torch" may have been placed there."

"One, two, three, four ... There's eight of them in all. I wonder what this room was used for. There aren't any signs of it being used for rituals or anything."

Having finished his investigation of the room, 9S makes his way to the door in the back. While the door at the entrance had apparently been left open, the door in the back was closed shut.

"It sounds kind of ridiculous, but ..."

9S places his hands between the area where the sliding doors meet.

"I'm gonna see if I can open this. Though it'll probably be impossible ..."

The sound of 9S's words overlaps with the sound of the door's creaking, as he slowly manages to move it to both sides.

"Wait a sec, it seriously worked?!"

9S looks on in utter shock at the now open door, as his pod moves in and out of the newly opened room, shining its light as it does. Gaining knowledge of the surrounding area in advance of the unit it supports is also a part of a pod's duties.

"Alert: Extreme differences in elevation between the door and passageway. There is a possibility of it hindering movement."

Unfortunately, Pod 153's warning alone isn't enough to curb the curiosity of a Type-S android.

"I'm just gonna take a quick look! I'll be right back!"

And just like that, 9S moves forward, his hand letting go of the door as it creaks shut behind him.

Chapter 4

2B lets out a small sigh the moment 9S and his pod disappear into the other room. She isn't about to let this chance slip through her fingers.

"Pod, initiate short-range battle support and deploy weaponry."

"Affirmative: Initiating short-range radio-wave camouflage and activating short-range attack gear."

Pod 042 proceeds through the protocol indifferently.

"Switching battle mode to Anti-YoRHa. Disengaging ID signal."

Thinking of what she'll have to do from here, 2B's heart sinks. And though it takes a great deal of effort, in order to keep her thoughts in line, she stills herself.

This is merely a part of her mission. Yes, it's just a mission. In her head, she focuses on the words "top secret".

It was only just after she'd disembarked from her flight unit that she'd gotten the mail notification. It happened neither while she was still on the Bunker, nor when she was entering the Earth's atmosphere. The moment she set foot in the desert, her pod had informed her of it.

Right then, she immediately knew what it meant. The mail had come directly from the Commander, rather than through an operator, at a time when it would be difficult to intercept. The highest level of secrecy.

No, actually, 2B knew what she'd have to do long before that message had been received. She knew from the moment she was instructed to investigate the ruins with 9S, that it wouldn't be long before she'd be given the command to strike him down. Unfortunately for her, that premonition would come true.

"Pod. Locate 9S's position and provide the best route for approaching from the side."

"Affirmative. Locating unit 9S's black box signal and commencing search for optimal route."

2B turns away from the door 9S and Pod 153 disappeared through. It's better to use a separate route to pursue them. Rather than follow them, she should find a way past them and lay a trap before they get there.

Her target is a Type S, after all. And the newest model in a type that excels at research and information gathering, no less. If she isn't careful, she won't be able to take him by surprise.

But then again, in terms of fighting ability, 2B has the upper hand. The outcome has already been decided, so in truth, there's no real need for a surprise attack. However, she'd rather get it over with quickly, if at all possible, before 9S even has a chance to realize he's being attacked. If she can manage that, she can end things before he feels more fear and pain than necessary ...

"Search complete," Pod 042 utters, its voice acting as her cue as she turns back towards the passageway they were in before. She makes her way up to the huge stone blocking the stairs, and leaps over it, 9S's black box signal immediately coming into range once she does.

2B descends the staircase making as little noise as possible. The source of the black box signal is in the next room. Quietly drawing her sword, she closes in on the door.

Just like the first door they came across, this room's door has also been left open. However, 9S is nowhere to be seen.

2B approaches the door further, making sure to check her surroundings as thoroughly as possible. There are no obstacles to be seen in the vicinity. In other words, that means there are no places for him to hide. However, she still can't be sure whether it's safe to set foot inside the room just yet ...

Suddenly, she can feel a presence behind her, and in an instant, 2B barrel rolls to the side, as bullets rain down upon where she was once standing. There's no doubt — that was a long-range attack from a pod program.

As she's working on righting herself, 2B spots a blade coming down at her. 9S, who had at some point looped around behind her, was now engaging her with a short-range long sword.

She never imagined she would be the one attacked by him. Despite having planned to be the one to initiate a surprise attack, for her to be the one hit by one is unexpected.

As she aims a kick to the hand 9S is holding his sword in, alarms go off in her head.

Why is 9S is possession of a short-range weapon? He shouldn't be capable of even holding a long sword in such a fashion.

2B quickly puts distance between the two of them, watching as 9S's sword burns in the heat of battle and dissolves away. If she had gone through with that kick carelessly, she would've suffered a substantial wound to her right leg. Aware of his disadvantage in close combat, 9S had probably set a trap of his own.

She needs to change the location of their battle somehow. In a dark place with poor visibility like this, it's unfavorable for her to have arrived later than he had.

With a huge leap, 2B puts distance between the two of them, and heads straight through one of the doors. She comes out into a room different from the one 9S's black box signal is coming from. Thinking over the amount of time it's been since they originally separated, she doesn't believe he'd have had enough time to place traps in this room as well.

9S follows quickly behind 2B. Despite having nowhere to hide, 9S shows no hesitation. Using Pod 153's laser as a distraction, he sets up a close-range attack of his own. 2B is nothing short of perplexed by 9S's aggressive fighting style; he fights as though he's fine with the concept of risking his life here. She's never seen him like this before.

Dodging Pod 153's lasers, 2B quickly moves to slash at 9S. But 9S's movements are quicker than she'd expected, and her attack fails to connect. Or, rather, it's his pod's long-range attacks that are causing the most trouble. Wanting to stop the movements of Pod 153 first, she shouts the order to her own pod.

"Pod! Set Pod 153 as your primary target!"

There is no setting which allows attacks at the risk of one's own life in a support unit's programming. Therefore, if one comes under attack, it will immediately switch over to evasive behavior. In other words, she can interrupt its long-range attacks during the moments it uses to evade. It only affords her about one or two seconds at a time, but it's enough.

The previously never-ending stream of lasers ceases for a moment, and in that moment, 2B quickly closes in on 9S. Not having expected an attack on his own pod, 9S stops in his tracks, giving 2B the opportunity to close in, her blade pointed directly at him.

"This is it," 2B thinks to herself, before she's overwhelmed with an intense feeling of discomfort, and the sword she'd been clenching so tightly falls to the floor.

2B tries to open her eyes, but she's unable to do even just that. Her arms, her legs — she's lost control over her entire body.

Suddenly the stones paving the ground approach her eyes, or more accurately, her body's the one that approaches them. As she falls, she can hear 9S's voice beside her.

"I'm sorry."

Chapter 5

"So it wasn't just a misunderstanding," 9S mutters. Or, rather, his words don't actually make any sound. "Voices" within hacking space are only recognized as his own personal data. The white surroundings are also nothing more than that.

"I wish it really were a misunderstanding," he thinks to himself. That 2B was willing to kill him is just too much. With each of his words comes inadvertent changes in his expression and tone, showing small glimpses of his doubts. Though soon, those doubts turn to confidence and that confidence becomes reality.

"I really didn't want to have to do this ..."

That isn't a lie. It's the truth. He just couldn't think of any other way. From the moment he realized that 2B was sent from the Commander to keep watch over him, he tried to think of whether there was any other way, but it was no use.

"There's just no way a Type-S could win against a Type-B."

9S knows 2B's battle capabilities well, as they've been sent on several missions together. If he didn't take control of her body through hacking, it'd be a one-sided fight. In order to hack 2B, who rarely ever shows an opening anyway, he had to seize the right opportunity while engaging her in close-range combat. It's in the moment of capturing prey that predators become most defenseless. It's through observing the remaining life on Earth that 9S has realized this.

Conversely, this was a successful hack precisely because 2B had really meant to kill him in that moment. If she had not had murderous intent, no matter how much 9S had attacked her, she would've just reverted to evasive maneuvers, and he would've never had the right opening he needed to hack her. The fact that 9S is where he is in this moment is proof of her intent to kill him.

"No matter how you look at it, we were both acting in our own selfish interests."

Though right now, 9S feels as though he's doing something even worse than merely killing her. Not only is he trying to kill her, but he's also forced himself inside her head without permission. He knows that's terrible. And yet.

"There's something I wanted to know."

9S cautiously proceeds towards 2B's memory storage. He didn't hack her solely for the purpose of taking control of her body and killing her. There's something he needed to know, no matter the cost.

"Therefore, you are to eliminate 9S."

The most recent thing in her memory seems to be the contents of a message. There's no doubt this was the message she received at that access point not long ago. Unprocessed memories are not stored in chronological order, but by the strength of the impression they leave on the unit.

The moment she'd opened that message, her eyes jumped right to those words. "Therefore, you are to eliminate 9S". In other words, 2B must've been anticipating that message from the beginning. All because she'd been thinking about how it'd be coming soon, her eyes darted straight for those words before anything else.

"Confirmation received."

"He appears to have tried ..."

"Contents,"

"Accessed the main server ..."

"Pending issue for some time ..."

"Several instances ..."

"Forbidden ... 9S has ..."

Fragments of her memory are scattered about. The words being as disjointed as they are indicating that 2B must have been very upset when she read them. Moreover, 9S himself had appeared while she was reading them. She hadn't been allowed the time she needed to organize the sentences in her head ...

9S presses on further into her memory storage, seeking the answers needed to satisfy his questions.

> "Is this it? The ... secret conversation between 2B and the Commander."

2B can be seen looking at the back of the Commander. Rather than a confidential conversation exchanged through a transmission, it seems she spoke to her in person.

> "But isn't it standard for an S-Type to conduct field surveys independently?"

"You're too concerned about what's standard. There can be exceptions. For example, what if it were an area showing multiple enemy responses? S-Type's are unsuitable for battle, so that would create the need for someone to go along and support them."

> "... Understood. Then I'll proceed with that."

> "For the time being, I only want you monitoring him.
> You'll be given more instructions at a later date."

It's a memory of 2B from before she'd ever cooperated with 9S. But right now, he shouldn't have done anything "prohibited" yet. Nevertheless, the Commander felt she needed someone to monitor him. He wonders what she was even basing her suspicions on.

Then, suddenly, a memory concerning 9S surfaces.

> "Scanners like me mostly work alone. Scouting out enemy lines and all that?
> I don't usually get a partner. It's kind of fun!"

Ah, he remembers this. Those are the words he told her in their first mission together. Apparently, 2B must've thought about her conversation with the Commander during that. 9S didn't realize that, even then, 2B had been monitoring him. Not to mention, he had no idea that they'd even be together "at a later date".

With the bitter taste of that memory lingering, he moves on to the next one. It seems to be a memory of a conversation with the Commander again, this time through a transmission, though the Commander's voice is hard to make out through static.

> "... S-Type's specialize in research and information gathering. Due to those characteristics,
> they tend to know too much. Perhaps this is the fate of S-Type models ..."

> "What's wrong with knowing too much?" 9S thinks to himself. "Is that really a thing?"

> "I'm certain that someday 9S will partake in something he shouldn't.
> No, he may even have already crossed that line."

9S can't refute that claim.
It's true that he'd already attempted to access the main server without permission.

> "There is as of yet no confirmation. However, it seems someone has already attempted unauthorized access to the main server. This attempt appears to have been a failure, but the next one ..."

That's right, he failed the first time. He had to escape due to an attack barrier. He withdrew immediately, so he shouldn't have left any traces behind. But he abandoned his next attempt after having already broken through one of the barriers. And during the next one, he was able to break through even more. The more barriers he broke, the longer it'd take him to withdraw. It became easier and easier for them to catch him.

It may have just been a matter of time, for his illegal access to be discovered. Even so, he wanted to know. The harder the barriers became to overcome, the more he wanted to see what was on the other side. Even though he knew it was dangerous, he couldn't stop. If there's something he doesn't know, he can't just leave it that way.

This must be what she meant by the fate of an S-Type model. What the Commander said was true. She had every right to monitor him, and maybe even kill him.

The next memory once again takes place in the Bunker. However this time, it's not showing the back of the Commander, but instead the front of her.

> "S-Type models are not suitable for battle. You should not have any difficulties disposing of him. However just because close-range combat isn't their specialty, doesn't mean they don't have the ability to fight. And in addition, S-Type models are sharp. There's a high possibility that he'll realize someone has been sent to monitor him."

> "He doesn't appear to have realized it ..."

> "You just aren't suited to be observing him. Just as he isn't suited for combat."

Once again, the Commander wasn't wrong. 2B really didn't realize it — that 9S had seen through her identity a long time ago.

At first, 9S thought she was only pretending not to notice, but that idea soon disappeared. 2B just didn't have the qualities she needed, or rather, she was clumsy. She'd show glimpses of kindness or concern during unexpected times ... It wouldn't be strange if she were just hiding who she truly was under that facade, but to an S-Type model, it was easy to figure out.

> "Either way, if you attack him, he's sure to attack back.
> And with that hacking ability S-Type's are so skilled at."

What a good eye she has. 9S wants to give her applause for it. Because, right now, things are proceeding exactly as the Commander had believed they would.

With this, he's found half the answers he'd been searching for. The reason 2B wanted to kill him was that the Commander had ordered it, due to him knowing too much. 9S wonders where the key that'll unlock the rest of this mystery must be, and then he hears it.

> "I'll let 9S go on ahead, and then I'll be able to deploy my weapons and make my way past him for a surprise attack."

Fragments of memories from a different time interrupt the memory of her conversation with the Commander.

> "If I can just end it quickly ..."

It's obviously an older memory, compared to the other one. 2B seems to have been thinking about how to dispose of 9S long before the Commander ordered it.

> "... Then 9S won't have a chance to realize what's happening ... And I can end it before he feels more pain and fear than necessary ..."

The other half of the answers he sought.

> "So that was it, huh," 9S thinks to himself, as he watches the interrupting memory disappear.

> "Even for someone like you, who's superior in close combat, if you were to be hacked by him, you would lose all locomotive functions in your limbs. That's why ..."

> "That's why what? What'd she done to 2B? So, the Commander didn't instruct her to use a surprise attack. But then what did she instruct her to do?"

These thoughts run through 9S's mind, before the answer reveals itself.

> "Set a trap for him in hacking space."

9S is overcome with a terrible feeling upon hearing those words. And in the next moment, a black wall appears in contrast to the white space around him, and purple and orange balls of light come flying at him. It's an installation-type logic virus.

By installing a logic virus in her memory storage, she created a surefire way to effectively attack him if he were to hack her. However, 2B could also be affected by said logic virus, so he hadn't expected her to have gone this far.

"Crap, I was careless!"

Well, actually, rather than being something he hadn't expected, it was more something he had just hoped wouldn't happen. The Commander always tended to choose methods which would place 2B in great danger.

"I gotta get out of here before my data gets contaminated."

"Unfortunately, even logic viruses aren't perfect.
So let's take the necessary precautions," 2B's memory continues on.

"Where's the exit?! Where's the route I secured?!"

"If you utilize a closed barrier, you can lock him within your logic circuit."

Before he can even fully realize what's happening, 9S's body ceases movement, and dark spheres begin to rapidly appear within the hacking space, caused by a barrier with a self-closing algorithm.

"Pod! Construct a new escape route!"

No response.

Not only did the logic virus attack 9S's personal data, but it also cut off contact to the outside, effectively severing any paths out.

He only has a few seconds remaining before his "current self" is crushed by the virus and disappears. He watches helplessly as the white space around him becomes painted over by black.

"Is this ... it ..."

The location from which 2B received her orders was from the access point within the desert. There were so many opportunities for her to kill him before they even reached their destination. There was no place to hide, the footing in the sand was terrible, and 2B is easily the better fighter — she had all the advantages in the world. Nevertheless, 2B didn't even attempt to attack him until they were already inside the temple. But 9S was able to see her memories, and find the answer to all of that.

"2B sure is clumsy ..."

It was all so she could end it quickly. So 9S could die without realizing what was happening.

The black spheres fill in the remaining space, leaving no gaps. However, somehow, it's a strange and quiet feeling. 9S feels neither fear nor pain.

"Goodbye, 2B ..."

And in that moment, darkness takes over.

Chapter 6

Just as quickly as when she'd lost control of her limbs before, control returns to her.

"Closed barrier operational. Logic circuit blockade complete. Isolation successful."

2B blinks a few times to confirm the success of the operation, before slowly rousing her body awake. Her motor functions are perfectly operational now.

"Elimination pending."

She feels numb, so much so that not even a needle could make her feel pain. The only thing she can feel is the feeling of having completed a mission, as she looks down at 9S's lifeless body before her. His black box signal hasn't faded, but the loss of his personal data has caused all his functions to cease.

If she could've killed him with just close combat then it would've been fine, but if she couldn't, then she could easily have used the logic virus to take him out. Even if 9S were to remove the virus, if he's imprisoned within the logic circuit due to the closed barrier, she'd still be able to erase each of his circuits. It was all the Commander's idea.

9S may have had his two-tiered strategy of hacking during close combat, but the Commander, who'd thought of a three-tiered strategy, had won this.

2B grasps her sword with the opposite hand, and thrusts it downward.

"Destruction of head."

The palm of her hand feels strange as it resists, a feeling she's never experienced before. It's not like this is the first time she's been made to destroy a friend's body. When another member of YoRHa became inoperable on the battlefield, and she had to destroy them, she didn't feel anything like this. She wonders if she's finished destroying him yet.

"Destruction of chest."

Once again, she thrusts her sword downward. It's peculiar. That strange feeling from before is spreading. It was only the palm of her hand moments ago, but now she can feel a sense of pressure in her upper body as well. Despite no signs of anything physically placing that pressure on her, she feels like she can barely breathe.

"Black-box signal confirmed offline."

His body lay before her, completely destroyed. With his personal data also destroyed, 9S can officially be considered dead. Her mission is complete. And yet, despite that, she feels as though she's left something incomplete — she feels strangely forlorn. She can't figure out why her respiratory functions feel like they're failing.

"Goodbye, 2B ..."

His words play back in her mind. The data that still remains in her memory, 9S's final words. It's a strange feeling, but she finally realizes what's been causing that pain in her chest.

"Right ... So this is ..."

The feeling known as guilt. Or perhaps even remorse. But regardless of what it is, emotions are prohibited.

At the moment she tries to suppress those forbidden feelings, 2B feels something else well up within her, as if to resist that. Memories of 9S.

His voice as he'd shout, '2B'. The smile he made when he told her how fun it was to have a partner — it was such a bashful smile. She wonders during which mission it was when he was so shocked by her unexpected clumsiness, as well.

She can feel a lump form in the back of her throat, as her chest tightens, and she grits her teeth. For the first time, she understands the pain caused by the memories of those left behind. But this is her own fault. She's the one who's accumulated more memories than necessary.

"Goodbye, 2B ..."

Again. That voice again. 2B shakes her head in an attempt to drive his voice out of her mind.

"I won't apologize."

It was her mission, after all. She holds no feelings of guilt. None whatsoever. If she's given the order to do this again, she'll do it in a heartbeat.

"Because this is my duty," she says to herself, as she raises her head.

"Pod, contact the Commander."

"Acknowledged."

Pod 042 begins communications, causing a projection of a screen to appear.

As her pod does its job, she thinks to herself. She knows she'll have to do this again, so she's decided she'll forbid herself from becoming too close to anyone else. She'll keep the time she spends with people, the conversations she has with them, to a minimum. That way, she won't create unnecessary memories again. That way ... she won't have emotions that should never have existed in the first place.

"Commander here."

2B breathes in deeply, pushing out all the remaining pain in her chest — everything.

"2B here. I've completed the mission."

From her indifferent voice, something within her fades away, like the sand which falls throughout the temple.

YOKO FACT 21 - From the Strategy Guide Q&A with Yoko Taro (translated by /u/Merutan)

https://theark.wiki/w/Strategy_Guide/Q%26A_with_Yoko_Taro

Why are emotions prohibited for YoRHa?

There are two reasons for that. First, during the descent operation depicted in the YoRHa stage play (that A2 participated in), A2 went into hiding after the battle due to emotions. Because of that, emotions were deemed unnecessary for combat and were subsequently banned. The YoRHa squad members only know that 'emotions were deemed unnecessary at some point in the past' but not any details. Another reason is that YoRHa units have black boxes. The fact that black boxes are a product of enemy technology is a subject of much shame to androids. The one who created the YoRHa forces decided that units with such a tainted origin "should not be allowed to act in the same way as the noble humans", and banned emotions when YoRHa was officially established.

Furthermore, to account for having black boxes, YoRHa units were implanted with a powerful program that compels them to love humanity (this is considering the possibility of a unit going rogue). YoRHa units salute using their left hands instead of right because they themselves are conscious of "not being allowed to mimic the actions of such noble beings as humans".

Why did 2B need to hide the fact that she was 2E?

As to not arouse suspicion from 9S, her assigned target.

Why did 9S give 2B an E-drug before the machine lifeform annihilation battle?

"Humans on the front lines used drugs during wars" - 9S was simply putting that information into action. There's not really any deep meaning beyond that.

Memory Thorn

Translation by /u/Merutan

Chapter 1

In a flash, a close-quarter weapon cut through the sandstorm. It is the type 40 sword - a state-of-the-art blade bestowed to only the elites fighting at the frontlines. The blade surges with lightning, knocking away a round object in an arc.

The now headless machine lifeform ceased its movements. A few seconds later, its cylindrical body toppled over on the sand and exploded. The explosion engulfed the bodies of two previously defeated machines and turned all into a shower of scrap metal.

Only the telltale sound of desert winds remain after the fiery explosion faded away.

As the sandstorm settles, a humanoid silhouette appears. You could tell that the silhouette belonged to an adult female by the gentle slope of its shoulders, its slim and tight waistline, as well as the well-shaped legs extending from its skirt.

However, the silhouette is neither an 'adult' nor a 'female' in the strictest sense. She is neither a human, nor does she have a sex in a biological sense. She is a type YoRHa android number 2 B type, or 2B for short. A model optimized for battle.

It's been a long time since humans have left the Earth. Humans had no choice but to flee for the moon in face of an alien invasion. Currently, Earth is nothing but a battlefield for the alien's machine lifeforms and the androids tasked to destroy them.

2B sheathed her sword and directed her attention behind her.

"Is this all of them?"

In response to her question, an object floating about three meters above the ground began its descent. It is a support unit called the pod. Composed of a rectangular head and four arms of varied sized, pods spend most of their time in the air, but can be deployed underwater if necessary. They're equipped with various functions in order to support YoRHa type androids, including long-range attacks against enemy units, analysis of the situation at hand, communication, as well as first aid.

"Affirmative: No enemy signals detected within a 5-kilometer radius of the access point."

I see, 2B replied, and started to make her way to the metallic box slightly taller than her. Access points camouflage themselves as a relic of human civilization, but it is an important facility both as a method of communication with the headquarters as well as a source of information regarding surrounding lands.

It's unclear whether they're aware of that fact or not, but machine lifeforms tend to gather around access points. Be it in a corner of some ruins, or the middle of the desert. Their behavior resembles insects gathering around a fallen fruit.

Therefore, YoRHa units have to destroy nearby machine lifeforms whenever they want to check their mail or retrieve geographical information about their surroundings. This happened so often that it became procedural for them.

After going through the motions of destroying machines, 2B was finally able to accomplish her original goal. She selected the newest message from her inbox and opened it. Her eyes skimmed over the sender and the words 'top secret' in the title, and was just about to read its contents.

"2B!"

YoRHa unit number 9 type S, or 9S for short, appeared out of nowhere. Unlike 2B, who has the form of an adult female, 9S was created after the image of a young boy.

"Is it a message from the commander?"

Not really, 2B answered curtly and tried her hardest to cover up how shaken she felt.

"More importantly, why are you here?"

"Huh? What do you mean, 2B?"

"It's not the time for the mission yet."

Since the pod notified her of a new incoming message, 2B decided to make her way to the access point earlier than planned. Even though she lost some time dispatching the machine lifeforms, she still expected to be able to finish reading the message before 9S arrived.

"Well...the operator told me that 2B is in the middle of combat. So I thought...I should help out."

"That's unnecessary."

2B shook her head slightly, trying to rid herself of something that was neither irritation nor anxiety.

"I guess that's true."

9S gave an exaggerated shrug. 2B finally understood what she was trying to rid herself of. It was something borne from her piled up memories of past conversations and past actions.

"Well, now that we've met up with each other, we might as well head towards the destination."

It was deja vu.

Chapter 2

"Urgh, sand in my shoes again?"

He just couldn't bring himself to like the desert, and it's all because of the sand. It's annoying when the wind blows and makes things hard to see, and his shoes are just full of sand as he walks. It's pretty fun to slide on the sand slopes, but walking on anywhere but the slopes is a pain in the ass. 9S scowled, and glanced at 2B. However, 2B walked on without any change in her expression.

"2B, don't you mind?"

"Mind what?"

"The fact that your shoes are filled with sand, 2B."

"While it does feel strange, it doesn't interfere with walking."

"Don't you hate it when the sand sloshes around in your shoes?
Sure, it's not a hindrance, but it's a matter of feeling!"

"Emotions are prohibited."

"Yeah, yeah."

You're one to speak, 2B, 9S thinks to himself even as he responds.

2B isn't as good at holding back her emotions as she thinks. At least, that's how it appeared to 9S. It's just a guess, but 9S thinks that her spiel about emotions being prohibited is more directed to herself than to 9S. She's scolding herself by saying it aloud. It's definitely a very 2B-ish thing to do.

9S thinks that she doesn't have to try so hard. She doesn't exactly have to walk the talk. Just how many YoRHa units actually follow the clause of not having emotions, anyway?

...but even if he says that out loud, 2B won't change the way she is. 2B isn't skilled enough to untangle her true feelings from how she acts on the surface.

9S glanced over at 2B again. He saw something behind those tightly shut lips. 2B was never very good at hiding things, after all.

"Nines?"

2B gave him a strange look. She's probably wondering why he's staring at her.

“Oh, it’s nothing...just...there’s so much sand...it’s so hot...I’d really love to take a bath right now.”

No. That’s not what he wanted to say.

“We have no need for baths.”

“That’s what I thought...”

What are you hiding? You’ve been acting strange lately. Anything on your mind? Or...?

9S knew that he won’t get an answer even if he asked those questions. They’ve been working on missions together for months, after all. Instead, 9S simply raised his voice.

“Oh! Is that the target for this investigation?”

He saw the hulking form of what appeared to be a huge building beyond the sandstorm. They’re very close to the desert’s end.

“Affirmative: The large building to the front is the target of our current investigation.”

The pod beside him answered. It is pod 153, 9S’s personal support pod. 2B’s support pod, 042 simply floated behind her in silence.

“They call this building a temple. I think the official name is the “Stone Temple”? Something of great importance was transported here - I guess like a god’s statue or something? And they’ve used this as a temple ever since.”

Silence. 2B stood frozen with her mouth open.

“2B? What’s wrong?”

Her lips moved as if to form words. ...but 2B changed her mind at the last second before speaking again.

“No. It’s nothing.”

Of course, it’s not nothing. She clearly struggled to come up with an answer. But 2B had no intention to tell 9S why. Even though she addresses him as “Nines” now, he still feels an insurmountable distance between them.

“Let’s go, 2B!”

9S made himself sound more cheerful than he’d liked. He took off right away, making it seem like he was excited about the prospect of an investigation.

No matter how he asked, 2B probably won’t give him an answer. He knew that from the very beginning.

It was unbearable.

Chapter 3

The Stone Temple was built in a deep valley. Because it was surrounded by steep cliffs, it took quite a bit of time and effort to reach the temple.

“Of all places they could’ve built a temple in...why here? I don’t get it.”

Reaching the temple was no easy task, as they had to descend to the very bottom of the gorge, cover a significant amount of ground, and then climb up the cliffs just to get to the entrance. 9S is completely within his rights to complain.

“Conjecture: The remains were surrounded by a “lake” or a manmade “canal” in the past, and access was made possible by ships or bridges.”

9S thought pod 153’s answer made sense. He knew that buildings which contained important people or objects were often surrounded by water. Perhaps that would explain the temple’s cylindrical shape as well - it was trying to get as much space as possible from its limited land mass.

"But that doesn't explain…this."

9S looked up at the huge tree in front of him. Clearly, it had withered a while ago, and its blackened trunk leaned powerlessly against the spiral staircase.

"What's the point of planting such a huge tree inside a building?"

The cylindrical building had an open ceiling, and the spiral staircase that extended all the way from the first floor crumbled away right before the topmost floor. Perhaps the staircase had once connected all the floors, but it's hard to tell from its current sorry state.

"2B, what do you think?"

No reply. She didn't even realize that 9S was talking to her until 9S turned to face her. Startled out of whatever daze she was in, she blurted out a response.

"What?"

"It's a spiral staircase."

9S deliberately chose to not repeat himself.

"What…what about it…?"

As expected, she wasn't listening at all. If she even caught a bit of what 9S said before, she would've probably replied with something like "But that's not what you said". The only reason she didn't do so was that she wasn't listening.

"Let's see how far up we can make it."

Deciding to not point out their failed communication, 9S made his way towards the spiral staircase. 2B followed in silence. Something is wrong. It's not like 2B at all.

2B is tasked with a mission, so why is she acting like this? Or is her mission the reason behind her current behavior? 2B has been acting strange lately, and 9S decided to stay silent on the matter ever since he figured out why. He pretended that he was none the wiser, and interacted with 2B the same way as before. Contrary to 2B who can't seem to keep a secret, 9S found it pretty easy to keep up the masquerade. Otherwise, he wouldn't try to access the main server illegally. Not even once, but multiple times.

Well, enough about himself. He's going to be disposed of soon enough, anyway. He knew that. And he knew that 2B will be the one to do the job.

He knew that ever since he received orders for the current mission. The investigation is just a farce, and there's no doubt that 2B had been given a separate mission.

The commander's orders…must be to eliminate 9S. Me. Right, 2B?

But even then, 2B's actions just seem…off. She's so distracted, and 9S doesn't feel a shred of tension from her. He didn't think 2B could undertake a top-secret mission with such a lackluster attitude. S types can't match B types in close-quarter combat, but they can and will counterattack, and they can let their pods provide long range support as well.

So…maybe there's another reason for 2B unnatural behavior. A reason unrelated to 9S's illegal accesses.

2B, who was walking in front of him, suddenly lost her balance.

"Watch out!"

9S reached out hurriedly and caught 2B with his arms.

"What's wrong? I've never seen 2B trip on a staircase."

It's true, the quality of the spiral staircase left much to be desired, years of wear and tear leaving holes and bumps. But there's no way that 2B, with all her athletic ability, would let herself be caught off guard.

"Are you alright?"

"Ah....yes."

She replied absentmindedly.

"I guess we're lucky there aren't any enemies around here.
That could've been fatal if machine lifeforms attacked."

"It could've...been fatal...?"

9S doubted his eyes. 2B was smiling. Her lips were curled unnaturally in a very strange smile.
There's clearly something wrong.

"What's happening? Are you feeling unwell?"

"No...I'm..I'm fine..."

2B wobbled as she tried to stand. Seems like she couldn't control her strength very well.

"Do you hear what you're saying!? You're clearly not fine!"
Why didn't he catch the signs of her worsening condition? But no, all her checks were green before the mission.. 9S was responsible for 2B's maintenance, so he would've requested to cancel the mission if he found anything wrong.

"Let's retreat for now."

However, 2B ignored 9S's words and began making her way up the stairs again.

"2B!"

9S raised his voice and grabbed 2B's arm.

"Warning: Enemy signals detected above."

"Warning: Multiple signals at 2 o'clock."

The two pods simultaneously warned them of danger. The chances of running into machine lifeforms were supposed to be close to zero according to the headquarters' prebrief.

Yet here they are, six aerial units approaching them from above. Their shapes resemble what 9S liked to call 'small fry', but they seem to possess the ability to emit jamming signals. That's how they were able to avoid detection until they came within range...

"Dammit."

They were certainly opportunists, choosing to attack when 2B wasn't at her best. Retreating is made difficult by the fact that there is an open ceiling above the spiral staircase - 9S and 2B would always be in the machine's range of fire.

"Nines! Get back!"

A sharp cry. 2B ran up the stairs as if a switch flipped inside her. Unlike the past few moments, her movements were smooth. She's back to the usual 2B.

"I'll provide support!"

Then the only thing left for him is to provide support as usual.

"Pod! Analyze enemy units' flight patterns!"

Careful to not get in the way of 2B's personal pod 042, 9S issued a command to 153. Machine lifeforms generally move in patterns specific to their overall shape. If those patterns can be predicted, then 9S could inflict the most amount of damage while sustaining the least amount of injuries.

153 used its long-range attacks to strike down a machine that was trying to approach 2B from the back. The machines weren't that fast.

Just when 9S thought they had a chance; the two pods again issued their warnings in unison.

"Warning: Enemy signals detected in the overhead corridor."

"Conjecture: Multiple non-aerial units. Enemy form and numbers remain unknown."

The aerial units are interfering with the pods' ability to obtain enemy data.
That's something that needs to be taken care of first.

"2B! Go on ahead! I'll take care of the aerial units!"

Type B units are better at dealing with non-aerial types due to their strength in close-quarters combat.

"Understood. I leave this to you."

2B jumped over the handrail, took ahold of 042's arm and glided towards the corridor. There was no hesitation in her movements.

"Pod! I'll be hacking to take control of the enemy!"

"Understood: Providing support."

9S rushed up the stairs and closed the distance between him and the enemy. Luckily, the enemy was slow to react and 9S managed to launch his invasion in no time.

Once he's in, machine lifeforms are often left defenseless. They've picked up a great variety of physical attacks, but they haven't quite learned how to deal with hacking internally.

Having found the control unit, 9S overwrote the system settings.
If he gained control of one unit, the rest was easy.

9S used his controlled unit to attack the remaining five aerial units. None of the aerial units responded in kind when attacked. Maybe the machine lifeforms don't have a concept of friendly fire - because even when 9S approached them with his controlled unit, they did not evade and were shot down immediately.

Having destroyed all five units, 9S activated self-destruction on his controlled unit and returned to the physical world. He ran up the spiral staircase, aiming for the corridor that 2B was fighting in. He thought he could provide some support, but it was clear that it was no longer needed.

"I guess you're all done here."

2B was surrounded with various pieces of scrap metal - what remained of the non-aerial units. They couldn't let their guard down completely because there might be enemy units in the floors above, but they've certainly cleared out their immediate surroundings.

"Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine."

Before he could even relax from hearing that, 2B abruptly dropped her sword. 9S ran towards her.
He had a bad feeling.

"2B!"

"Don't worry. My hand...just slipped..."

Strange noises accompanied her voice. Her hands, shaking uncontrollably, scratched at her own neck.

"Logic virus!?"

2B fell down on her knees. 9S tore off 2B's goggles - 2B's eyes were shining a bright crimson. No doubt. She was infected by an enemy unit.

"I'll remove the virus through hacking!"

"Wait....don't..."

2B shook her head in pain.

“What are you saying? We have to remove the virus now!”

He can’t afford to waste any second. Once the infection reaches her personality data, there’d be nothing that he could do. 9S laid down 2B on her back, and forcibly hacked into her despite her still shaking head.

Chapter 4

What used to be a pure white hacking region was stained black in various parts. A classic effect of the logic virus. A logic virus takes over an android’s memory area and logic circuits, effectively taking control of their personality and body. If left to its own devices, the infected android will destroy its surroundings and even attack its comrades.

“I have to hurry…”

Luckily, 9S has seen this type of virus before. He had already succeeded in combating this virus in the past.

“But the infection is progressing too fast. Plus…”

An orange light whizzed past 9S’s personality data. It was an attack by the virus.

“Such a pain.”

But since the virus didn’t appear to be irregular, its attack patterns remained the same as before. 9S had no problem tackling the virus while avoiding its attacks.

It didn’t take long before he removed all traces of the virus. All he needed to do was to make sure that no viruses were hibernating inside 2B’s logical circuits. As simple as performing a quick scan.

“Huh? This is weird.”

As he was scanning over her logical circuits, he discovered cracks in 2B’s personality data. In general, hacking regions appear as ‘pure white walls without a single crack’, but what he saw in front of him resembled the cracked walls of an abandoned building. He just didn’t see it before when the virus’s black color covered up the cracks.

“Is this an aftereffect of the virus?”

He had to find out more. He began a deep search, and was immediately met with the sound of rushing wind. Words filled his entire field of vision.

“You are ordered to terminate 9S.”

It was a fragment of 2B’s memories. These words were probably part of a mail’s contents. The sound of the wind is probably reflective of the location itself - the desert. 9S remembered the sight of 2B receiving mail in front of the access point. That wasn’t too long ago.

9S paused his scanning activity and accessed the memory at hand. He felt a pang of guilt, but since his own name was mentioned, he should probably be privy to its contents.

“…has attempted illegal access to the main server multiple times.
We found traces of him having accessed the most confidential layer in the past few days.”

The words are wavering. The sounds of the wind are no more.
It seems like 2B was shaken to the core during this memory.

“Therefore, you are ordered to terminate 9S.”

2B refused to have her virus removed because she didn’t want him to see this memory.

“You shouldn’t even let that bother you. I knew that you were an assassin sent by the commander.”

The only thing he didn't know was the when. But he knew it from the moment he met up with her at the desert's access point. He felt something from 2B as she read her mail with her back turned towards him. The final nail in the coffin was how she didn't even realize 9S was approaching until he called out to her...

"Destruction of the head."

The sound startled 9S. Fragments from a different time were intermingled with the memories of 2B reading the mail. It was a low, emotionless voice. But since it sounded so much like 2B's voice, 9S couldn't help but follow that voice.

"This is 2B. I have accomplished my mission."

It's the same voice. If the previous words were from 2B as well, whose head did she destroy?

9S approached the scattered memory fragments.

"What...is this?"

Upon first glance, these fragments appear to be scattered, but they were actually bent and connected in unnatural ways. What's more, every single fragment had thorns protruding from them. 9S had never seen memory data like this.

They were full of thorns, they were disfigured, they were intermingled...they were 2B's memories.

Maybe he shouldn't see them. Maybe ignorance is bliss. Logically, he knew that, but couldn't stop himself anyways. He was slightly resentful of his natural curiosity as an S type.

He touched one of the fragments and was immediately wracked with pain. But the pain helped him make up his mind - he needed to see this.

"But there's no way an S type can win against a B type."

This voice belonged to no other than himself. Since this is 2B's memory, he must've said those words to her at some point. But he couldn't recall anything like that. His memories were erased at some point.

By whom? For what?

Seeking for answers, 9S accessed another piece of memory.

"Goodbye, 2B."

His own voice again. Hearing such a frail voice, 2B tried her hardest to keep her emotions in check. 9S didn't get any visual information, probably because 2B had shut her eyes tightly at this point.

"Goodbye, 2B."

"Goodbye, 2B."

"Goodbye, 2B."

These same words repeated themselves. When 2B read the message from the commander at the desert access points, these were the words that she heard in her mind.

But when and where did he say that?

Another piece of memory began its playback at that point. It took place during the mission at the so-called Sand Temple. It was the first time 2B executed 9S. She trapped 9S in her hacking space, cut off his escape routes via a wall created by a self-closing algorithm and erased his data.

Those were 9S's parting words, right before he was about to be annihilated in 2B's hacking space...

"2B has killed me before."

That makes sense, he thought to himself. It certainly explained the sense of wrongness felt all along.

He attempted to access the next fragment. Again, he felt pain, but there's no way he could stop now.

That particular execution happened in outer space. 2B destroyed 9S during their descent to Earth. Another execution happened at the Sand Temple. Having learned from her previous mistake, 2B immediately killed 9S with a flash of her sword once they stepped into the temple. A few of the executions also happened right here, in the Stone Temple.

Sometimes she executed him after undertaking missions together. Sometimes she attacked and executed him while they were "total strangers".

No matter how many times he's executed or how many times his memory got wiped, 9S will always reach the same conclusion - that the commander is hiding something. And to sate his curiosity, he will always attempt to access the main server.

2B tried to stop him. Multiple times. When she got the chance to work with 9S, she tried her hardest to persuade him to not suspect the commander. When she had to execute him without a chance to interact with him, she erased his memories and tried to nip his suspicions in the bud.

But all her efforts were fruitless. No matter what she did, she couldn't change the end result. It didn't matter if she treated 9S with affection or indifference. It didn't matter whether she called him "Nines" or not. At the very end, 2B will always receive orders to kill 9S.

"So that's how it was..."

He's been wondering about this ever since he first met 2B. 2B sometimes seemed like she was talking to someone else while they were alone. Back then, he concluded that 2B must've worked with other S types in the past.

His conclusion wasn't completely right, nor was it completely wrong. 2B didn't work with another S type - she worked with 9S. But not the "current 9S".

"That could've been fatal if machine lifeforms attacked."

He now knew the reason behind 2B's peculiar actions after he said those words. Because a previous 9S said the exact same words in the exact same location in the past. He was killed by 2B right after that. His words triggered 2B's memories of that time and caused her suffering.

And not just this once. Every memory she had of 9S brought great pain to her. So much that her own personality data is in tatters.

"I won't apologize, because this is my mission. I won't feel any guilt. Not now. Not ever."

9S looked over 2B's personality data again. It was pure white, but looked like it could crumble to dust at any moment...

Chapter 5

Her consciousness surfaced from the darkness. She blinked, and saw 9S's face close to her. He had a downcast expression. Or did she imagine it? 2B blinked and looked at him again.

"Nines...?"

That's right, they were attacked by machine lifeforms. She fought them but became infected with the logic virus. Her last memory was of her trying desperately to stop 9S.

"I have removed the virus."

She didn't manage to stop him. 9S forcibly hacked her and dove into her memory regions.

"So...you've seen it all, huh?"

9S nodded silently.

"I see..."

She wasn't surprised. She knew that this day was coming. S types are very insightful. 9S has already seen through her secret mission multiple times.

"2B wasn't your actual name, huh."

But this scenario had never happened before.

"2E."

This was the first time 9S called her by her real name. E type number 2. Tasked with pursuing and executing deserters or rebels, as well as finishing off fellow androids that could no longer function on the battlefield. She is a YoRHa type android specializing in such dirty jobs.

2B drew her sword. 9S's shoulders were shaking. He knew that 2B had killed him countless times before.

"I don't intend to kill you anymore."

She pointed the tip of the blade towards herself and gave the handle to 9S.

"So kill me."

Her mission ended in failure. She failed as an E type.
She's now a defective product that can't even justify her own operating costs.

"At the very least, I want to die by your hands..."

She had no illusions about this being any form of atonement. But if she could even give back a sliver of what she'd taken from 9S... there's nothing much left for her to give. This is the only thing that she had to offer.

She saw 9S tighten his grip on the sword handle. She smiled and awaited her last moments.

The sword flashed. However, the blade was not aimed at 2B.

"Nines!?"

2B widened her eyes in shock, her head covered in a shower of blood. 9S, having sliced his own throat, slowly fell over. She cradled his body in her arms, her own screams of 'Why?!' sounding distant to even herself.

"Because...I had fun."

She doubted her ears. He had fun? That's impossible. There's no way that's true.

"I really enjoyed the time we had together. I think...that goes for all my previous selves as well."

"Nines..."

I'm sorry, she wanted to say, but 9S interrupted her unspoken apology.



"Don't apologize. Instead..."

Even with his rough breathing, 9S was smiling.

"Next time...don't hesitate...to kill me.
Because we.... will meet again."

As long as he wipes his memory regions and re-installs his personality data, he will get to meet 2B again. Even if he won't be his current self anymore.

"I want....to see you...again..."

Even if their next meeting is nothing but a preface to another execution.

"I understand."

Her vision blurred, and she couldn't discern 9S's last expression.

The body in her arms became heavier. The hand touching her cheek fell limply to his side. His black box signal was weakening by the moment. It would be cruel to let this drag out any longer.

She laid down 9S's body and thrust her sword through his chest. His black box signal disappeared completely.

"I promise you."

That I won't hesitate to kill you. The next time, or the time after that. Not because of her mission, but because that's what 9S wanted. To grant his wish of meeting again...she'll kill him.

2B silently withdrew her sword from 9S's chest.

YOKO FACT 22 - From the NieR Dinner Talk Show (translated by /u/TwoSidea)

https://theark.wiki/w/NieR_Automata_Dinner_Talk_Show

When 21O was telling 9S that they are going to increased his unit production, YoRHa was going to produce more 2B and 9S as a set since they were so effective and 2B was so good at her job...

Parts of 2B's skirt and 9S pants are used for heat radiation and wearing them allows heat to escape. This is why when they self-destruct, those parts are destroyed from the immense heat the android releases.

Ishikawa was first picked for 2B's role. For 9S, Taro wanted then to find someone who represents something in-between brother and father NieR. When asked for what her character thought about humanity, she said that 2B wanted to do with 9S things which people used to do, like buy a T-Shirt.

Easter Egg: During the "beginning hacking" animation, a text saying [code: 2B] is shown for a split second. It might or might not be an accident as when hacking was developed there was no 9S in the game yet. It could be UI designer's decision to show 9S feelings to 2B.

Since 9S keeps finding out the truth, he dies rather often. The fact that he dies often and his memory not being back up most of the time is overlooked by other YoRHa units since it's a rather common thing to happen.

Small Flowers

Translation by /u/Merutan

Chapter 1

Those small specks looked very much like black sand. They were discovered in one of many mankind's ruins.

"We" found some androids hiding out in the building, so "we" first spent 5 days and 20 hours exterminating those androids. Our enemies were thrown against walls like pieces of trash, and it was during cleanup that "I" made a new discovery in one of the small rooms.

Multiple glass bottles were lined up on shabby shelves. Most of them were either empty or broken. However, one glass bottle remained in good condition. Taking the bottle carefully into my hands, "I" confirmed the existence of multiple small specks within the bottle. A lookup in the database revealed that they are "seeds" of "plants". However, that's all "I" could find.

After observing the glass bottle for some time, "I" decided to take it back as research material.

"We" machine lifeforms have been fighting with the androids for thousands of years. Androids are highly skilled at combat, and "we" were unable to defeat a single android even with 100 machines. However, "we" end up winning regardless. By repeatedly repairing ourselves and multiplying, "we" were able to crush them with sheer numbers. If "we" can't take them down with 100 of "us", then "we" will do it with 1000. If that doesn't work, then "we" will do it with 10000. "We" repeat this repeatedly and increase our numbers. Winning a war all boils down to "time". "We" will simply fight until "we" win. That is the most important battle requirement "we" machine lifeforms learned from our creators.

On the other hand, "we" were completely clueless about issues outside of battle. Because of how our creators programmed "us", "we" were forbidden from using gigantic weapons that would cause undue destruction to the environment. As a result, this planet is filled with plants and animals. However, "we" did not do much research into those lifeforms.

"We" collected information about geography and weather because they could be utilized to our strategic advantage. However, information about animals and plants were deemed unrelated to combat.

But is that true? The chances may be low, but isn't there the possibility that these seeds contain hints on how to destroy androids?

It's worth a shot. After all, "we" have infinite time. More than enough time.

Chapter 2

After some discussion in the network, it was decided that the discoverer of the "seeds" should be tasked to investigate them. In other words, "me".

"I" have gone through some past records, but all "I" could find was that "seeds" were a younger form of "plants", but "I" did not know how they would transform into "plants". To that end, "I" needed to start by hacking into the androids' servers.

There wasn't much recorded in the androids' servers either, but after a few days of searching, "I" managed to locate a file that stated, "sow your seeds when the climate becomes warm". It appeared to be a guideline for nurturing plants. "I" didn't understand what precise conditions can be considered "warm". And since they used the word "sow", surely there must be some surface to "sow" onto, but that wasn't specified either. Why are our enemies so careless? There's no way they can win against "us" like this…

For now, "I" will start by aggregating weather information and calculating an appropriate timeframe from my data. "I" have also decided to experiment with various surfaces to "sow" onto. Though "I" wanted to try out all kinds of possibilities at once, the number of "seeds" are limited. Therefore, "I" have limited my selections to "sand", "concrete" and "soil". "I" have observed plants growing from all three of them, and if my predictions were correct, then "soil" would be the most promising candidate.

7 days later, “I” confirmed that the “seeds” sprouted from “soil”. My predictions were correct, and “I” shared that fact amongst “us”.

Chapter 3

24 days after sowing the seeds. The first signs of problem appeared. The plant increased in height along with the increase in temperature, which was a positive sign. However, multiple small insects were found on the insides of the leaves. After some observation, “I” can see that they are depriving the plant of its nutrients.

The insects were too small to pick out. Furthermore, they do not attempt to escape even when water is splashed on them. “I” tried firing a low-powered laser, but that ended up blowing off a few leaves from the sample plant. They sure are troublesome for their size...no, it’s precisely due to their size that “I” am having such a hard time. This is a new strategic viewpoint that’s been overlooked by “us” machine lifeforms, as “we” do everything we can to become bigger and sturdier. Perhaps this is something “we” could learn from. “I” will share this with the server as soon as “I” have all my data in place.

Chapter 4

85 days after sowing the seeds. Rain.

In the end, the plant suffered serious damage from the insects. However, it continued to grow. It also had sufficient water, which is necessary for growth. According to documents that were previously recovered, plants do well in neutral or slightly alkaline water, so “I” have been adding minute amounts of neutralizer to maintain that condition. However, “I” do not know if this is truly the right way to go about nurturing plants. “I” only have to look outside to see gigantic plants wrapping themselves tightly around buildings. Why did those plants grow so large in size? Perhaps as a result of environmental changes, they have adapted to be resistant to acidic rain.

I looked down at the growing plant. I saw something white and bright growing in between its leaves. Carefully, slowly, I took a closer look at the object in question. It was a small, small bud.

I searched through all my available data.

According to the androids’ data, this object called a “bud” will eventually transform into a “flower”. The data contained multiple different pictures of “flowers”. Red ones, pink ones, blue ones, white ones...my search came up with multiple flowers, but it was insufficient to determine what kind this particular plant was. Oh well. Eventually “I” will be able to tell.

“I” put in more neutralizer.

But only a little bit this time.

Chapter 5

102 days later. Clear skies.

After days upon days of rain, the plant’s flowers blossomed. Though the pictures “I” took as reference featured big flowers, this particular plant grew a large number of small flowers that were only around 5mm in diameter. This could potentially be due to a difference in the type of plants, but it could also be that “I” nurtured them in a wrong way.

By the way, recently, whenever “I” look at this plant, “I” experience an indescribable feeling surging up from within. “I” have a theory that it’s because of how similar the flowering plant is to a scene from a video about explosions.

Looking back, “I” realized “I” haven’t used my weapons in a long time. This is an abnormal situation for “us” machine lifeforms, who were made to wage war. However, nurturing this plant is my important mission. No matter how much “I” truly seek to battle, “I” cannot abandon this plant and run off.

It was then that “I” received an incoming transmission. It was a short transmission, but it was hidden behind over two hundred layers of encryption, and took “me” four days to decrypt it on my own. “I” didn’t even need to open up the data to guess at its contents. There were only a few situations in the past that required such heavily guarded transmissions.

The data contained within was a battle plan for an upcoming, large scale conflict with the androids.

Chapter 6

124 days later. Rain.

After the 24th reboot, “I” finally regained a portion of my visual sensors. A brief checkup of my body revealed that “I” lost functionality in one-third of my joints, with half of my sensors being rendered completely useless. “I” was lying prone on the ground.

18 days ago, during the large scale conflict, “I” was not allowed to abandon my position. Or more precisely, “we” didn’t have the luxury of issuing a change of orders to an experimental entity like “me”. According to the remaining video footage, “I” was shot by the androids and ceased functioning.

“I” tried to move my body, but all that came out were unpleasant creaking noises, and “I” was unable to stand. It looked like “I” was damaged pretty thoroughly. “I” predicted that it will take half a month of self-repair with what’s available at hand, and experienced a tinge of irritation. “I” turned my head as much as possible, and a white blurry object appeared in front of “me”. After adjusting the focus, “I” saw that it was the small flower. More than half of the plant was destroyed from the blast, but a small portion of it remained untouched. Seeing as how its surroundings were burnt to a crisp, this flower was extremely fortunate.

A motionless plant. A powerless “me”. After observing the plant for some time with the camera, “I” resumed the self-repair process.

My job isn’t over yet. It is my mission to record what becomes of this plant.

Chapter 7

After that, the plant continued to bloom with small flowers. “I” continued to record the growth of the plant. 22 days after my last reboot, my body was completely repaired and back to its original state. Though “I” have become disconnected to the rest of the machine lifeform network during combat and cannot seem to reconnect, it was not a hindrance to my mission of nurturing this plant.

From what “I” have learned so far, “I” was able to determine the conditions that improve plant growth. Appropriate amounts of water. Warm temperatures. Soil. On days of storms and days of strong winds, “I” did everything “I” could to secure an appropriate environment for plant growth.

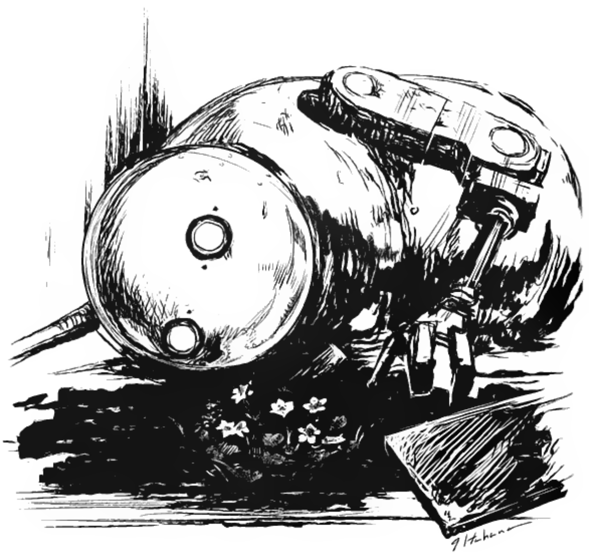
The plant, once weakened from battle, recovered and grew even more flowers. Looking at those flowers, “I” no longer felt any unease.

Chapter 8

280 days have passed since sowing the seeds.

“I” discovered that a portion of the plant became brown in color. Initially, “I” remained optimistic as this was an occurrence “I” have seen multiple times in the past. However, the brown parts expanded as days passed by until it covered the entire plant.

My sensors were reacting to something. Looking up, "I" saw that snow was falling. Understanding that the temperature is dropping, "I" put a low-level heater next to the plant and tried hard to maintain its temperature. "I" continued to observe it for a few more days, but the plant remained brown. No, to be more precise, it was crumbling away bit by bit.



"I" retrieved the reference materials for the first time in a while, and tried to search for methods to repair the plant. However, "I" found no such instructions in the data. No matter which plant "I" looked at, the records only pertain to when it blooms and bears fruit, and did not say a word of what happens next.

A few more days passed. The temperature continued to drop, and snowfall became more frequent. "I" decided to cover the plant with my hands.

"I" continued to protect the brown plant.

"My" mission is not over yet. "I" must repair this plant. "I" will understand and learn. "I" will repair this plant.

Because "I" have infinite time.

YOKO FACT 23 - From the Strategy Guide Q&A with Yoko Taro (translated by /u/Merutan)

https://theark.wiki/w/Strategy_Guide/Q%26A_with_Yoko_Taro

Does the demonic element (maso) exist in this world as well? How is it used in battle?

There's not a lot of demonic elements going around, but it does exist (for example, Emil's attacks). Also, the YoRHa units' skills utilize the demonic element.

Is the red liquid flowing in the androids' blood?

It is not blood, but something made to look like it. Easter Egg: when our protagonists met with Adam for the first time and pierce him, the blood texture on the floor has some robot heads embedded into it, further confirming Adam being an aggregation of machine lifeforms.

Do androids, as well as Adam and Eve, have reproductive organs? Do they use them?

They do not have them right after their 'birth'. Since reproductive organs were hidden in most of the information from humans, they failed to copy those organs. However, during their learning process, they may gain body parts that serve as reproductive organs. Since they can copy anything, they can create semen, change their sex, and even mimic pregnancy to a certain extent, but since they cannot become truly organic lifeforms, they will not be able to undergo insemination or mitosis. They can only create very convincing imitations of the real thing using other materials.

So, the YoRHa's black boxes are made from machine lifeform cores, but do the machine lifeform's data and memories remain on the core?

Since the core is sealed tightly, the machine lifeform's memory will not transfer over. However, if you copy an android's memory space into the machine lifeform's core and then corrupt the android using the core, you can transfer the core's memories.

A much Too Silent Sea *Translation by /u/Merutan*

[07:30 - Rise from bed ~ breakfast]

Her consciousness surfaced rapidly from the depths of slumber. She felt stimuli behind her closed eyelids. It's probably getting brighter. Irritated, she tried to pull her blankets up to cover her head. Her actions were interrupted by a call of "10H".

"Report: Time to rise and shine."
"Sleepy..."
"Recommendation: Get up."
"Don't wanna..."
"Warning: Get up."
"Five more minutes..."

Cold air washed over her body. Her blanket was forcibly removed from her. 10H's personal support unit, pod 006, certainly takes no prisoners.

"Geez...what a pain...."

10H gave up and pulled herself into a sitting position. She knew when it was time to cease her meaningless struggle and surrender...before the pod moved on to more drastic measures. The pod in question skillfully folded the blanket with its four arms of varying sizes and placed it at the end of the bed, before moving a pillow on top of it. It was a clear message - no way you're going back to sleep any time soon. 10H gave a quiet sigh as she surveyed the pod's handicraft. White bedsheets and white blanket. White pillow. Her surrounding walls were white, the floor was white, and the ceiling was white too. Everywhere she looked, she saw white. The only exceptions in this room were herself and the pod. Her black clothing and the pod's red-painted body. Actually, there's another source - the monitor on the wall changed colors based on its content.

"Water temperature, water pressure within normal limits," a voice recited from the monitor's speakers. This facility is located deep in the sea, more than 10000 meters from the surface. Even the slightest change could lead to disastrous results, so the facility's surroundings were under constant monitoring.

"Report: Breakfast is ready."

The pod carried breakfast on top of a wagon. White again, she thought to herself. A white plate and white cup. The wagon itself was also white.

"Recommendation: Eat up while it's still hot."

10H reached out to the piece of bread on the plate. It's a square, flat piece of bread toasted light brown. She bit down, feeling the dryness and minute vibrations with her front teeth. Finding it hard to swallow, she poured the liquid in the cup into her mouth.

"Question: How was the toast? Was the coffee a bit too strong?"
"Not really..."

The pod faithfully recreated what human civilization considered breakfast, but 10H wasn't particularly moved.

"I mean...I don't care. We can survive without eating."
"Denial: A healthy life begins with good habits. You have to sleep properly and eat properly. Breakfast will leave you pumped and ready to go."

Pumped? What does that mean again? Oh, right, "motivated to undertake tasks". Pod 006 used a lot of ancient words from back when human civilization still existed.

"Urrgh...that just means I need to discharge that extra energy somehow."

If she doesn't eat, she doesn't need to discharge anything. 10H thinks that's a lot more convenient, but the pod doesn't seem to agree. Apparently, 'eat well poop well' is the key to a healthy mental balance and worth spending time on. But in reality, androids can basically break down any so-called 'food' substance within their bodies, so they practically have no need for excretion.

“Oh...”

Her toast slipped from her hand and landed on the plate. Upon closer inspection, she saw that her fingers were damaged. She thought that she was having trouble holding the cup because of grogginess, but it looked like her fingers were suffering from decreased functionality.

“How did this happen?”
“Answer: Stress from carrying objects.”
“Was that...the cause?”

They received a shipment of supplies yesterday, and while she remembered that she helped the pods move supplies around, she wasn’t sure if she was quite passionate enough about the work to actually strain herself.

“Recommendation: Don’t overexert yourself.”
“Alright. I’ll be more careful.”

She couldn’t even remember something that happened yesterday - did that have anything to do with the whole mental balance thing? Maybe the pod had a point, 10H thought to herself. She should probably start eating properly.

[08:00 - Patrol]

10H’s room wasn’t the only area that was entirely white. The same color extended to every crook and cranny of the facility - walls, floors, ceilings. Delivering construction materials 10000 meters below the sea must’ve been a hard task on its own, so whoever built this facility probably didn’t have much time to spare for interior decor. However, 10H herself was only assigned to this facility after it began operating, so it’s not like she’s speaking from personal experience or anything. This was simply her hypothesis. They built a facility so deep in the sea - fully aware of the constant struggle against the water pressure - for exactly one reason. They cannot afford to have this place discovered by machine lifeforms.
This facility houses backup servers that were made in anticipation of emergencies. Every piece of data concerning the moon’s Council of Humanity, as well as all YoRHa squads, are stored here. YoRHa unit data may be an acceptable loss, but humanity’s data is definitely the most important thing in the world.

“Server room no. 27, all clear.”

10H immediately tried to shut the door and was met with scolding.

“Warning: Please do a more thorough check.”
“But I don’t really understand all the details.”

A non-trivial amount of effort and technology were required in order to store such a large amount of data in the limited space they had under the sea, so the servers here were all constructed in strange and complicated ways. Maybe an S type could make heads and tails of it, but as an H type who specializes in repairs and tuning, she didn’t even think it’d be worth trying.
Anyways, even if she doesn’t understand it herself, as long as the pods do, it’s fine. Fifteen pod 006s were hard at work in server room no.27. Fifteen bright red pods. They really stood out against the white walls and roofs - almost to an offensive extent. Fifteen streams of voices filled the room.

“Proposal: Today feels like a bad day. Why don’t we reorganize the data on another day?”
“Not recommended: We can’t just break procedure.”
“Answer: I was just joking.”
“Report: More importantly, did you hear? Today’s lucky number is 9.”
“Proposal: So should we do our work while floating upside down?”
“Refusal: Don’t wanna. Are you actually serious?”

What’s going on with this conversation? 10H massaged her temples. Are their minds really that empty?

“Oh well.”

She supposed she wasn’t that much better herself. Since there’s not much to do, she didn’t have a lot of opportunities to exercise her mind either. 10H’s main job involved the maintenance and inspection of the pods,

and undertaking the necessary repairs when they malfunction. That's why an H type android was stationed at this facility. However, pods don't really break down all that often. They could even take care of most minor repairs themselves. Since pods are android support units, they're well-equipped to deal with emergencies, and they come pre-installed with simple repair programs. Basically, they don't need 10H.

A long time must've passed since she was first assigned to this facility, but 10H can't recall the exact amount of time. At some point, she found the daily "This is the Xth day in your assignment, your total operation time is X hours" announcement too annoying, and stopped listening to information about the passing of time.

"I didn't see any red flashing lights, so we're ok, right?"
"Understood: Well, I suppose."
"Cool. Let's get on to the next one."

She emerged from the corridor and started climbing the stairs. Since the many server rooms were interconnected in a web-like structure, the nearby corridors were filled with curves, slopes, and stairs.

"Urgh! Walking is such a pain!"
"Denial: Walking makes good exercise."
"I get that, but why do I have to wear these shoes...?"

The bottom of her shoes was affixed with magnets, which made each step significantly harder. Walking around the facility in these shoes certainly made good exercise, but it didn't change the fact that it's a goddamn pain.

"Recommendation: Stop complaining and start walking!"
"Sigh..."
"Recommendation: Your response?"
"Yeeees."

The first thing she saw after climbing the stairs were the flashing words "on the air". It's the broadcast room. She was told that the Council of Humanity's broadcasts are relayed through this room. Maybe it's to prevent anyone from pinpointing the moon server's location from the broadcast source, but she wasn't privy to the actual reason. Maybe the pod would tell her if she asked, but she didn't really want to know. She's not interested in the contents of the broadcasts either. She just didn't care.

"There's a broadcast going on today, right?"
"Affirmation: 972 seconds until end of broadcast."

What a lucky day, she whispered to herself. Since she was forbidden from entering the room during broadcasts, she could basically skip over this room. It's like taking a shortcut - even if it didn't actually get her anything. Aside from more free time, she supposed.

[10:30 - Free time]

"I'm bored."

10H yawned as she moved another chess piece. Once she's done with her morning patrols, she didn't have anything to do until lunch. And once she's done with lunch, she'd be free until dinner. In essence, most of 10H's day consisted of free time.

"Recommendation: Cover your mouth when you yawn."
"Geez, don't be so picky."
"Not recommended: Nope, that's bad manners."

Pod 006 had a lot of opinions. 10H remembered other pods as being more businesslike and not engaging in small talk all that often, but since 10H was the only android assigned to this facility, the talkative and somewhat annoying pod 006 was the only pod deployed here.
Pods were supposed to operate with a set of three bodies, but the pod in this facility was a special model that utilized a few hundred bodies. That's just the minimum amount required to maintain this facility. One of them always followed 10H around. But since all the pods looked the same, 10H couldn't tell whether the pod 006 with her right now was the same pod 006 as yesterday.

But since 006 only had a single self-consciousness, the pods didn't quite care enough to make that distinction. Apparently, every single of those hundreds of pods was pod 006. 10H found it hard to wrap her mind around that fact.

"Wait, wait! Hold up! I take that back!"

She was so caught up in her own thoughts that she missed an opportunity to take one of the pod's pieces.

"Refusal: This is the third time. I told you that there'd be no next time."
"Just this once! It's only been three times today, right?"
"Refusal: You've said the same thing yesterday. "Just this once". And how many times did you actually retract your moves?"
"Umm....like ten times?"
"Denial: Thirteen times. Don't try to lie to me."

It's too small of a number to misremember. Both 10H and 006 can memorize this level of information as long as it isn't actively deleted.

"I mean...my AI isn't used for playing chess. Cut me some slack..."
"Refusal: No way!"

Sparks flew from the tips of the pod's arms.

"I got it! I got it!! So no violence, please!!"
"Understood: It's good to hear that."

The pod used its arm - no longer surrounded by sparks - to move its knight piece. 10H tried her hardest to hide the smile that was threatening to form on her face.

"It's my turn, right?"
"Affirmation: Go ahead."
"Your bishop is mine!"
"Proposal: Wait! Let me take that back!"
"Not hearing any of that!"

Like 10H, 006 wasn't equipped with a chess AI either. Deep thought was never required of pods, as it wasn't necessary for the completion of their missions.
Though they were both fairly good at remembering things, neither the pod nor the android had the logical processing required for chess. So what if you made them fight each other? Chess quickly degrades into a somewhat silly game where the only way to victory is to fish for your opponent's mistakes, often by talking about unrelated topics.

"I feel like we're playing a completely different game."

10H flicked a piece on the chessboard. Just like her shoes, the chess pieces had magnets attached to them, so a simple flick wasn't enough to budge them at all. She heard that the combo of metal chessboards and magnetic pieces was invented so that humans could enjoy playing chess in shaky vehicles. First the bread and coffee breakfast, now this. The facility was certainly filled with callbacks to human civilization.

"Is there any meaning to AIs battling it out using a game that neither of us was specialized for?"
"Conjecture: It just means we're bored?"
"I mean, you're right. But do we really have to kill time by playing a meaningless game?"
"Answer: An idle brain is the devil's workshop."
"Huh?"
"Answer: You come up with bad ideas when you have too much free time on your hands. Therefore, killing time is necessary. Source is from an ancient text concerning human civilization."

She wondered whether that even applied to her when she wasn't human, but she couldn't say for sure that they didn't need to kill time.

"Alright, then let's keep going..."
"Agreement: So I'll..."
"It's my turn!"

10H moved her own piece in a flash. Of course, the bishop was still hers to take. Sparks flew from the pod's arm for a split second. Maybe that's the pod's version of a tut.

"But why do we have so much free time?"
"Answer: Free time means peace. That's not a bad thing, right?"
"I guess. No machine lifeforms have ever discovered this place, after all."

They're located more than 10000 meters under the surface. If they're attacked, that'll be the end of them. There's nowhere to escape.

"I mean...shouldn't they have stationed a B type here in case of emergencies? But I guess it'll be a mostly defensive battle, so maybe a D type is better?"

The facility only hosted backup data, but they're important data regardless. You can't rely on an H type to put up a meaningful defense even if she put her life on the line.

"Denial: B types and D types cannot perform maintenance, inspections, and repairs."
"So....S types?"
"Denial: S types get bored easily. They cannot bear to spend time on useless things."
"Ohhh...I think I get it now."

She can repair pods when it's needed, and she isn't bothered by all the free time she has. In that sense, she's the most suitable for this position as an H type.

"But can you fight, pod? I'll have you know that I can't, not at all."
"Answer: I am equipped with an acceptable degree of weaponry, so we'll be fine. I just don't need to use it on a day to day basis."
"I see. Well then, that's good to hear."

There are a few hundred pods around, so as long as they can make up for 10H's lack of battle capability...

"Let's see. Next up is...."

She tried to make her move, but the chess piece slipped in between her fingertips. The rook bumped into a pawn on the chessboard and rolled off onto the floor. She hurriedly tried to pick it up again, but it wasn't going too well.

"My fingers aren't quite right today."

It's been like this since the morning. What appeared to be a flesh wound on the surface might be indicative of a deeper problem inside.

"I'll go repair this."
"Not recommended: We are out of stock of materials for finger parts. You'll have to wait until the next shipment."
"That's in a long while, huh."

After all, they've just received a shipment yesterday that 10H helped sort out. She never thought that she'd be needing repair parts because of that.

"Guess that's a no go then. I'll try adjusting the program itself at least."

She could probably stop herself from dropping things as frequently if she just adjusted her grip and range of movement.

"And that's it for today's match."

10H left the pod to clean up the chessboard and returned to her own room.

[11:30 – Investigation – own room]

She dove into her mind space and took a close look at the program responsible for controlling her fingers. She did a simple check up on the few spots that were malfunctioning and adjusted her signal relay algorithm. It's been a long while since she did something befitting an H type.

"This will do until the next shipment of supplies."

It's not like she fixed the hardware problem, after all. She only made adjustments so she could perform tasks like "eating and drinking without dropping anything" and "moving a chess piece". She had to make tradeoffs that negatively affected some of her other movements.
For example, she won't be able to control the power behind actions like squeezing something with her fingertips. If she wanted to squish a bug on the window with her fingers, she's likelier to make a hole in the glass. She could probably also destroy touch panels just by using them, and keyboards are a risk too. But really, all she needed to do was refrain from operating touch panels until the next shipment, so it's not all that restrictive. She didn't have to use touch panels all that often, and the pod makes a good substitute for when she really needs to. Even better, there are no machines in the facility that requires a keyboard, and no insects either. Basically, it's not all that big of a tradeoff for her.

"Well, I got nothing to do, after all."

She was lucky that she wasn't operating in a place where the slightest malfunction would be deadly.

"Alright, time to finish up. ...huh?"

She found a strange thing in a strange place. Just like humans, androids do not use all parts of their brain at the same time. They intentionally left some blank space in their minds in case of emergencies, so the blank part can act as a buffer for unexpected load.

A strange code was placed right upon that blank space.

Why? And who?

She'd expect this kind of handiwork from an S type, or an H type like herself, but she's the only android in the entire facility. Of course, pods can do it too, but they would most definitely leave some traces. Writing and modifying the blank regions is also not a simple process, and it's not something that beings other than herself could easily access.

So...I did this myself?

If she did, she certainly didn't remember. Did she also erase her own memories? But why?

Umm....is all the free time getting to my head?

Well, it wouldn't hurt to try and decrypt the code. She hoped the encryption algorithm wasn't so complex that she'd need the processing power of an S type, but it didn't look like she had to worry. The algorithm was so simple, it could even be called crude.

But still...why?

She didn't know. Decrypting the code revealed coordinates inside the facility, in an area that had restricted access.

What's going on..?

Tilting her head in confusion, 10H decided to head towards the coordinates.

[11:50 – Investigation – entrance room]

The coordinates pointed to the entrance room. It was the only route that connects to the outside world, so it's not used much aside from accepting shipments. The room itself was divided into two areas, which are never open at the same time. It's designed to prevent water flow into the facility.

"What a pain…"

The gate to the first area was placed under heavy locks. As the manager of this facility, 10H did have rights to unlock the gate, but it required both her passcode and black box signal, which was kind of a pain. But turning back at this point wasn't even an option for her. Something just felt off.
The gate opened, and lights illuminated the first area. The walls, the floor, the ceiling - everything was so white it hurt her eyes.

"Question: What are you up to? Is there something wrong?"

All of a sudden, the pod appeared. It seemed to be concerned as it circled in front of 10H to peek at her face.

"Nothing's wrong. There's just something I need to check."

She made a beeline for the second gate. The first area was quite big.

"Why is it so big? There's so much unused space."
"Answer: You need this amount of space to adjust the water pressure when things enter from the outside."
"That I get, but we don't use this place at all except to accept shipments. So it's kind of a waste."

She put her hand on the second area's gate. The coordinates she decoded lie beyond this gate.

"Not recommended: Stop it. Access to the second area is forbidden."

She ignored the pod's voice and opened the gate. The automatic lights came on, revealing a pure white space practically identical to the first area.

"There's nothing here…?"

She thought that some sort of object would be placed here. It might be a treasure chest, or it might be a bomb, but surely it must've been something worthy of leaving an encrypted note in her mind space's blank regions. But there was nothing in the room. Not on the floors, not on the walls, and of course not the ceilings.

"Warning: Danger ahead."
"I know. I won't open that door."

The gate at the end of the second area was equipped with a valve, since it leads directly outside. If the gate is opened without adjusting the water pressure, a tremendous amount of water would rush in instantly. 10H didn't want to think about the destructive power of the water pressure at 10000 meters deep, but she's pretty sure that both the pod and she will be flattened.
She walked to the location her coordinates pointed at. Maybe the 'thing' that the encryption hinted at wasn't an object, but a phenomenon.

"Warning: Turn back immediately."
"I know."

Why this particular location? She let her eyes roam as she walked. Her surroundings were entirely white, including the gate connecting the first and second areas, as well as the gate connecting the second area and 'outside'.

"Huh?"

The gate might've been pure white before, but it was tainted with a different color now.. There were several black trails running down the valve. It looked like something had been peeled off, and the trails resembled scratch marks.

"What kind of marks are these…?"

She wanted to take a closer look. Suddenly, she saw sparks fly before her eyes. A beat later, pain from the back of her head. She was smacked by 006.

"What are you doing!? Your arm is pretty damn hard, you know that?"

10H complained as she turned around, but was rendered speechless by the sight before her. She was held at gunpoint. The pod was in ranged attack mode.

"Wait! Hold up!"

The first shot came without warning. She dodged it just barely...or so she thought. A searing pain ran down her bicep, and the pure white floor became stained with her blood.
10H shook off her shoes. She wasn't able to dodge it completely because of the magnets attached to her shoes. The second shot fired. She jumped, and a searing laser nailed where she stood a second ago. However, not a trace of it was left on the floor or wall. She realized for the first time that the facility's walls and floors were heat resistant. But there was no place to hide in the huge room, so 10H could only run around. She launched herself from the floor, from the wall, and even rolled on the ground as she shouted,

"Hey! What are you playing at!? What's this about!?"

The pod didn't answer and maintained its attack mode. The response to her question came in form of a third shot. She took off and ran. The pod overtook her and placed itself in her path. She dodged around it, but took a hit from her back instead. She grunted in pain.
She finally understood that the pod was seriously trying to kill her. Due to some error in its programming, maybe?

She had to destroy the pod somehow. But how? H types weren't meant for combat. Their true potential shines in the presence of a B type for offense and D type for defense. On top of that, her target was a support pod. The destruction of friendly units was a job for an E type, and not an H type like her...

But she couldn't afford to think any longer. She was bombarded by an assault of ranged lasers and close quarter arm strikes. She had no time to even catch her breath. Pain from her side. The smell of burnt skin. Her evasion speed was dropping. She couldn't run around for much longer. However, she didn't even have a weapon to counterattack with. This wasn't even a matter of whether she was suited for combat or not - this facility didn't stock any sort of weaponry.

So she has to fight with her bare hands? No way! She's not a B type, so it's not like her arms were particularly powerful....arms? What was she doing before this? She was adjusting the control program for her fingers so that she could move chess pieces without dropping them. She made a sharp right. Her injured left leg throbbed in protest, but she ignored it. She made a beeline for the pod. The pod aimed its gun at her. She grabbed the tip of its firearm and squeezed it with her fingertips. With a satisfying sound, the gun twisted and bent under her hand. Using her right hand's fingertip, she flicked away the pod's body. She curled in upon herself and braced for impact. The sound of an explosion in the air followed soon thereafter.
That was too close for comfort. Thanks to her previous adjustments, the action of 'squeezing something with her fingertips' was performed with an abnormal amount of strength behind it, so she was able to achieve feats like crushing a gun with her bare hands. It was a brute force solution. 10H took a deep breath and felt a sharp pain coursed through her. She didn't know which of her wounds were throbbing, because she was covered in them.

She didn't expect to be facing such an outrageous situation. Just what was going on...?

Her thoughts were interrupted again. This time, by the alert announcing an enemy attack. Why? Confusion filled 10H's mind. Why was there a supposed enemy attack in the second area? Only she and the destroyed pod were here. She was confused, but intrinsically, she understood. 10H took off towards the gate - the one connecting the first and second areas -, so she could lock it from this side.
The hundreds of pod 006s in this facility were unified under one consciousness. Though their bodies may be separate, they share the same self-consciousness. So every new pod that came into this area would try to attack 10H again. The alert was not a false alarm.
She heard loud thumping sounds against the gate she just locked - the sounds of multiple pods bashing their bodies against the gate. The noise put a toll on her already beaten body, and 10H grimaced as she knelt down. She couldn't return to the facility anymore. The remaining gate led to the bottom of the sea, more than 10000

meters under the surface. She had two choices. Either die via crushing by sheer water pressure, or die via the lasers of hundreds of pods...

"Can I pick neither?"

But she couldn't stay here either. Clutching her burnt side, she began making her way towards the gate that led to the deep sea. The pods were hiding something, and that something existed beyond this gate. If she's gonna die either way, she might as well die from knowing. She'll die once she's seen all of the pods' secrets...though she might be flattened by water pressure first.
She reached out towards the valve. An unpleasant sound reached her ears, and her fingers were instantly roasted.

"What...!?"

Her eyes flickered between the valve and her own fingers, burnt to a crisp by a charge of high voltage electricity.

"This...this just isn't right."

Why was the interior side of the gate equipped with such a function? If it's for defense, then the electricity should be on the outside. The way it is, it's almost as if...
10H took the valve again. Her hands were burning. But she continued to turn the valve. Her field of vision was bright red from the pain and heat. Her throat was trembling. She was screaming, but screaming what? She didn't know. The valve hit the end of its rotation. She now knew the reason for the black trails. Somebody must've attempted to open this gate before, forcibly turning the valve even as their hands were burnt by electricity. These were the trails left behind from back then.
She unlocked the gate. Now all she had to do was press a button, and the gate would open. With a single press from her broken hand...she would die. She didn't have time to hesitate. The gate blocking off access from the first area wouldn't hold up much longer. 10H pressed the button, and the gate opened.

She wasn't crushed. In fact, the opposite happened. As soon as the gate opened, 10H was shoved outside by a strong force, almost as if she was being sucked into a void. For a split second, she heard a whooshing sound, but everything quieted down immediately. Her body crashed and tumbled on the ground. Wincing from the pain, she slowly lifted herself up. Her vision was blurry from the storm of sand.

"Sand? Huh? What is this?"

Her voice was strangely muffled. There wasn't a drop of seawater to be seen. She lifted her face and saw the black sky overhead, filled with little dots that she recognized as stars.

"No way..."

She doubted her eyes. Right in front of her, she saw a round blue object floating in the black expanse of space. The Earth. In other words....

"This is the moon?"

The moment she put her thoughts into words, everything became clearer. She didn't realize that she was operating under the moon's gravity - which was only 1/6th that of the Earth's - because that's how she was programmed. A YoRHa unit's body weighs approximately 150 kilograms and is controlled by strong artificial muscles. Someone must've made adjustments to her control program so she wouldn't notice. The cup that came with a lid. The magnets on her shoes and the chess pieces. Those were all put in place so that 10H wouldn't suspect a difference between the actual gravity and what she herself experienced.
This wasn't 10000 meters under the sea. There was not a single drop of seawater around the facility. Only dry sand and dark void of any sound.

"Just what was I doing? What have I been made to do?"

She put her mind into overdrive. The incredibly large and wasteful entrance room. The complex interiors of the facility. The server room and the broadcast room. The words 'on the air' flashed by in her mind. She was forbidden from entering the broadcast room when those words were displayed. Now that she thought about it, that was awfully strange. After all, the room was just used as a relay point, so it shouldn't matter whether anyone was there or not. But 10H was forbidden from entering the room regardless, because...

...this was no relay point that acted as a camouflage for the broadcast source. This is the source. Once she understood that, the rest fell into place rather quickly. The servers contained in this facility weren't storing backup data. This is the Council of Humanity. That's the secret that the pods tried so hard to hide from her. And since this pure white facility only housed a few hundred pod 006s and 10H...

The Council of Humanity didn't exist. Which meant that...humanity itself...no longer exists? Is that it? That must be it. Her knees grew weak, and she slowly sank to the ground. Sand flew soundlessly around her. She felt a different kind of pain, unrelated to her wounds, threatening to overcome her. She felt the pods behind her back. A few hundred pod 006s were closing in on her.
B types were simply too strong. D types could drag out the battle indefinitely. S types would see through the farce right away. And that's the true reason behind why an H type like her was appointed the manager of this facility. But even 10H managed to reach the truth when given enough time. And she escaped 'outside', even at the cost of burning her own hands. She was captured immediately and had her memories wiped, and that's why she could only leave behind clues in a blank region that she herself had exclusive access to.

The pods surrounded 10H. She knew that this was the end for her, but she wasn't all that scared. She'll have her memories wiped and return to her good old boring days. The shock from the realization that humanity had gone extinct, as well as the sadness she's experiencing right now, will all be erased without a trace.

"I lose. I surrender. I'll go in peace."

She raised her hands and closed her eyes, awaiting her capture. Right before her consciousness sunk into darkness, she heard the pod's final words.

"Poor child. That's the 46th time."



NieR Music Concert: A Repeating Prayer

This recital called A Repeating Prayer, is a story that goes in more depth regarding the cyclical relationship between 9S and 2B. While in-game we only saw 2B kill him a single time, she actually had to repeat this action repeatedly during their three years of work together.

It (probably) takes place during the year 11944, about the same time as Memory Cage and Memory Thorn.

Original Concert Key Art



Scene 1: December 29th

Translation by /u/ilfans

2B (narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
We are perpetually trapped ...
... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.
Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment?
I often think about the god who blessed us with this cryptic puzzle ...
... and wonder if we'll ever have the chance to kill him.

(9S speaks while struggling painfully.)

9S: Damn ...! 2B, why?! Why did you ...!

A wide, white sword penetrates 9S's stomach. As delicate, red blood drips down him.

(2B hides her pained feelings.)

2B: You attempted to access highly confidential information ... therefore ...

9S: B-But ... 2B ... T-Trust ... me ...

9S's vital signs begin to fade. Heart rate decreasing, body temperature declining, motor functions failing, pupils dilating. As every one of his parameters breaks down, he chokes out his final words.

9S: I-It hurts ... It ... h-hurt ... s ...

(His heart stops, and there is the sound effect of a flatline beep.)

2B: Kh ... ugh ...

(Unable to bear it, 2B begins to cry.)

Pod 153: Pod 153 to 2E. Proposal: Delete 9S's personal data and reinstall default personal data.

2B: This is ... too much ...

Pod 153: YoRHa unit No.2 Type E. Unit 9S's actions of obtaining sensitive information from the Bunker were within the predictions. Model No.2 Type E's duties include the punishment of such actions. No.2 Type E should have understood that this mission's outcome was already determined, and acted accordingly.

	Question: Requesting current status of unit No.2 Type E, who, despite the predicted events, has yet to complete the given mission.
2B:	Shut up already ...
Pod 153:	In addition, emotions are prohibited for YoRHa units.
	Proposal: Halt the expression of emotions, terminate unit 9S's current personal data, and reinstall —
2B:	I told you to shut up!
	(2B becomes enraged.)
2B:	(While breathing heavily, 2B murmurs.) 9 ... S ...

Scene 2: April 6th

	(9S and 2B's respective monologues. 9S speaks in his usual, cheery tone.)
9S:	My name's 9S ... YoRHa unit No.9 Type S.
	Us Scanner models make use of our abilities in order to gather information on certain areas, as well as obtain data on our enemies, the machine lifeforms.
	Sometimes we make use of our hacking abilities, too, but combat's never really been our forte.
	We usually work alone, though.
	But even so, we're able to be useful to the rest of our fellow YoRHa units ...
	Or, that's what I like to think.
	(2B speaks with a cold tone.)
2B:	My name is 2B. YoRHa unit No.2 Type B ... is the name I'm operating under.
	Type-B models specialize in combat. We're a type of unit deployed to the front lines whenever an intense battle breaks out.
	As a result, we feel nothing at the thought of throwing our lives away. That's ... just how we were created.
	... I wouldn't hesitate for even a moment to give my life in battle. But ... After meeting, you, 9S ... I ...
	After being partnered with 2B, I've had to fight a lot more often than I used to.
9S:	She just gets into more and more dangerous situations all the time! Just watching her makes me nervous!
	As a Scanner model, I'm only able to equip one type of weapon at a time, so it's not easy for me.
	(9S begins to look a little happy.)
9S:	... But even if it's hard, I'm just happy to be by her side. I'm ... not alone anymore.
	It almost feels like ... I have a family.

2B: They knew even from the design stages that the 9S model's observational skills would be exceptionally high. So they had already foreseen that he'd someday attempt access to Project YoRHa's confidential data.

My official designation is ... 2E. No.2 Type E.

From the moment 9S gains illegal access within the Bunker, it becomes my duty to carry out his execution. It's a duty that I must repeat ... over, and over ... without end.

(9S's voice becomes calmer.)

9S: I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel something special towards 2B.
But that sort of thing isn't allowed for us YoRHa troops.

(2B, with a hint of pain in her voice.)

2B: Over and over ... I continue to kill 9S with my own hands.
And every time, it feels like a void within me deepens.
I wonder ... if it's okay for me to hope ...
For the day ...

For the day ...

2B and 9S: When my sins can be forgiven.

(The sound of a heartbeat stopping, and a flatline beeping.)

Pod 153: Unit 9S's death and deletion of current personal data confirmed.
Memory banks completely eliminated. Beginning installation of default personal data ...

Scene 3: January 18th

(9S is seen investigating something.)

9S: So, uh ... I guess this is the commercial facility.

2B: Yeah.

9S: Seems like the people of the old world were able to get a lot of shopping done here.

And even if they didn't buy anything, they still had a good time just looking at everything.
According to the records, they referred to that as "window shopping".

Man, humans sure are weird creatures.

Hey, why don't we try it someday? Window shopping.

2B: We're soldiers created solely for the purpose of fighting.
We don't need useless things like shopping.

9S: Once we eradicate the machine lifeforms, us soldiers won't have anything left to do.
We'll enter a new age of peace. I'm talking about for when that happens. I bet it'll be fun!

2B: Hmm... When that day comes ... I'm all for it.

9S (narration): That's what she said, as she turned her back to me and began walking. Almost like she was embarrassed or something.

Almost ... like she was sad.

Later, we spent a day fishing together in the Flooded City.

Well, we were actually investigating some marine resources, but we couldn't manage to catch the fish we needed.

There wasn't a lot of talking. We just ... spent the day fishing, watching the gentle waves in front of us. The salty, humid wind blew against us. The surface of the water sparkled brilliantly.

I remember all those little details, even now.

But the memory that sticks out to me the most happened in the City Ruins.

It was right after we'd finished our current mission.

I went and provoked a wild boar, and it ended up chasing the two of us around the whole rest of the day.

We didn't have any information on creatures that were more powerful than the machine lifeforms we were always fighting, so we had to retreat to the top of a building to get away from it.

And while we talked about whether the collection of data for wild boars should take priority over the collection of data for machine lifeforms, we sat atop that ruined building, covered in plant life, looking out over the rest of the city.

Plant and animal life has increased since the Old World. But some things haven't changed at all, like the smell of crisp air, or the sound of rain. But those are all just a part of my ... most precious memory.

We went around to a whole bunch of places together. Er, for our missions, of course. Not for fun. We were always running into some sort of trouble, like intense fights with huge machine lifeforms.

But for me, the memories that stuck with me the most weren't the ones having to do with those battles, but instead ... they were just the ones where 2B and I spent our time doing insignificant things.

(9S looks a bit lonely.)

9S (narration): Those memories ... are going to disappear soon, like all the rest.

Along with my personal data. But "this" me ... is just happy to have gotten to spend those days with you.

Goodbye ... 2B.

(The sound of a heartbeat stopping, and a flatline's beep.)

Pod 153: Unit 9S's death and deletion of current personal data confirmed. Memory banks completely eliminated. Beginning installation of default personal data.

2B: I see ...

(There's a small pause.)

Pod 153: Because unit 9S continuously carries out illegal access to confidential data, he must be terminated repeatedly.

However, during this confrontation, there was little resistance detected from unit 9S.

Further, according to his memory banks, he was aware of unit 2B's true designation as an Executioner model. Question: Why did unit 9S not resist?

2B: 9S ... knew that I was ... an Executioner model?

(2B laughs, though it's full of sorrow.)

2B: Hah ... hahaha ... Pod 153, you ...
You could never understand 9S ...

Pod 153: Negative: This is the tactical support unit assigned to unit 9S. This unit is with him during operational hours, as well as during maintenance.

This unit is also responsible for reporting when he accesses the Bunker's data illegally. It can be inferred that this unit is aware of all information regarding unit 9S.

Therefore, the claim that this unit "could never understand 9S" is inappropriate.

2B: You don't know a single thing about 9S.
You ...

(2B speaks with a lonely tone.)

2B: And me both ...

Scene 4: February 4th

(2B is crying, in pain.)

2B: No ... Enough already ...

Pod 153: Proposal: Unit 2B should carry out her assignment.

(The sound of a heartbeat stopping, and a flatline's beep.)

2B: I don't want to kill him anymore ...

Pod 153: Negative: Unit 2B's assignment is still in effect. The Commander has already denied the mission cancellation request submitted 64 hours ago.

(The sound of a heartbeat stopping, and a flatline's beep.)

2B: Why ... do I have to ...

Pod 153: Report: Unit 2B was modeled after a YoRHa test model who was the last surviving member of her group. Unit 2B was chosen due to her ability to adapt to harsh environments as well as her combat capabilities.

2B: I'm not suited for this mission at all ...

Pod 153: Negative.

2B: Someone ... help me ...

[Pod 153 begins repeating itself as if it's broken.
Behind the pod's voice, the sound of a flatline beep can be heard.]

Pod 153: Negative ... Report: Proposal: Destruction: Order: Punishment: Humanity: Moon: Fiction: Machine: Boy: Conviction ...

(2B shouts as though to block out the pod's voice.)

2B: Nines!!

(There is a long pause.)

9S (narration): Us YoRHa units ... only exist to be destroyed.
Over and over, we die, and we're just reborn again.
A lot like the cycle of life and death that living creatures have.

(9S now speaks with some worry in his voice.)

9S (narration): ... But, why does my chest always feel so heavy?

How come every time I lose my life, I end up feeling like something important was taken from me? Hey, 2B ... Will I ever be able to see you again?

Why does losing my current self ... ... make me feel so lonely?

(There's a long pause.)

2B (narration): Us YoRHa units ... only exist to destroy.
In order to recapture Earth and restore humanity, I'll harbor no regrets.

Even if ... I must kill my fellow androids.

2B (narration): (2B seems anxious) But killing 9S like this, over and over ... It feels like I just keep staining my heart with more and more dirtied blood ...

And no matter how much I try to wipe it off, it won't disappear.

The heaviness of 9S's words just keeps getting worse ...!

(Despite how much she wants to speak with honesty,
she shuts her feelings inside herself.)

2B (narration): ...

......

Hey ... 9S ...

I wonder ... Were the choices I made wrong ...?

(The continuous beeping sound of an error.)

9S: Gah ... Ahhhh!

(9S appears to be suffering, on the verge of death.)

2B: 9S ... Nines!

(Still suffering, his breathing becomes rough.)

9S: Hah ... hahaha ...
So you ... finally called me Nines ... at the very end, huh ...

2B: Why ... Why did you activate your own self-destruction ...?!
If you do that, your personal data will ...

Due to a self-administered physical virus, 9S's body begins to collapse on itself. His hair, his fingertips, his arms ... They all fell the intense pain of decomposition.

9S: ... It's okay ... 2B ... You were assigned to — to kill me ... weren't you ...?
I-I knew ... How much it hurt you ... to have to do this ...

(The hand he was attempting to stroke 2B's cheek with no longer existed.)

9S: I-If it's for you, 2B ... I — I'd easily ... throw my life away ...

(He attempts to squeeze even the smallest bit of hope out of his collapsing body.)

2B: Nines ... How could you ...

(9S, in immense pain, attempts to tell 2B his final words.)

9S: 2B, I ... N-No ... YoRHa unit No.9 Type S ...
... h-has been truly honored to fight by the side ... of unit No.2 Type B.
M-May your future battles shine brightly ...

2B: Ni ... ne ... (2B can't even form words.)

9S: 2B, I — I have ... a final request ...
If you and I meet again, I ... I want you to kill me. P-Promise?

(2B can only let out sounds of agony.)

9S: Hahah ... You sure are kind ... 2B ...

(9S's voice began to fade.)

9S: The towns, amusement parks, and oceans ... we saw together ... I'll never forget them ...

(His eyes no longer hold any light within them.)

9S: Thank you ... for being with me, 2B ...

The sound of a heartbeat stopping, and a flatline's beep.
9S breathes his final breath.
2B moans in grief.

2B: I ... I ... Nines ... I'm sorry ... I'm so sorry ...

(Everyone raises their heads.)

Everything that lives is designed to end.
"They" are perpetually trapped ...
... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.

2B (narration): Even if the pain of killing 9S is the sin I must bear.

9S (narration): Even if the joy of meeting 2B is my reason to live.

2B (narration): I'll still resist.

9S (narration): I'll keep fighting.

2B and 9S: Even if that means ... Going against God.

Devola & Popola's Memories

※ As members of the same model, all that was left to them was the stigma of being labeled "rampant androids". Unable to endure further persecution, they began their long march to a city located a great distance away. Leaning upon each other, burdened with an unforgivable sin. This story takes place shortly before they arrive at the Resistance camp.

"……"

A dusty wind kisses my cheeks.
Buried in sand, we press forward one step at a time.
We have nowhere else to go, after all.
Because our models–the Devola and Popola models–are defective.

[Record: Transitions in the Project's Initial Phase]

When first we woke, there were still people.
They had flesh. Egos. Emotions. Souls. And they issued us a single order:

Function as observers of Project Gestalt.

This is the sole mission of the twin Devola and Popola models. It is the only reason we exist at all.
We were the latest model, though many companions shared our appearance. There was a sparkle in all of our eyes. A sense of pride at having been entrusted with humanity's future.

And yes, there was anxiety as well. But we existed as a pair. We shared destiny's burden as a pair.
And because of that, all hesitation was swept away.

Each pair was given their own cities as observation areas. We were ordered to guide the Replicants with our own hands. All for the sake of the "promised time" that would one day arrive. We were the only ones who could handle such a duty. We were observers, after all.

"Ah!"

"Watch out!"

Devola staggers and falls in the soft yet unforgiving sand.
I hurry to her side and sign with relief when I find she's not seriously hurt.

"Are you all right?"

"Sorry, Sis. Guess I spaced out there for a bit."

She smiles–the same wry smile I know so well–as she rubs absently at her leg.
It is wrapped in a white bandage.

"Your bandage is coming undone. Here, let me change it."

"It's all right, Popola. Come one–we have to go before we lose the light."

"We won't be going anywhere if sand gets into that thing. Now quit whining and hold still. I'll be quick."

Devola grunts and turns away. I take it as consent. Soon we are resting in the Shades of a nearby rock as I pull the bandage free. Artificial skin–torn and bloodied–peeks out from beneath the bandage. Judging by Devola's current lack of ambulatory control, I imagine the circuitry underneath has been damaged as well.

Taking a deep breath, I check the circuitry to see if it can be repaired.
As expected, wiring in the nerve circuitry has been damaged. Replacing it will require new connectors, as well as some tools. None of which is easy to find in a desert.

"Sorry about this, Sis," mutters Devola.

That wry smile again. It kills me every time.

"Don't you dare apologize," I respond. "You've done nothing wrong."

I calmly change the bandage, trying not to let my worry show. I make it as tight as possible so no sand can slip inside. It's all I can do until I get the proper materials.

But that's going to be a tall order, considering our current condition.

"I'm sorry, Sister."

"Okay, now YOU'RE apologizing!"

We both apologize while insisting the other's apology isn't necessary.
It's kind of funny in a way. Such a trivial exchange under such circumstances.

We laugh together, the sound echoing out across the desert before being stolen by the cool evening wind.

[Report Regarding the Increase in Relapses]

"There has to be some way to prevent relapses!"

Devola's sharp voice echoes through our private quarters.

"You must be quiet, Sister. The Replicants will hear."

"Pffft. They wouldn't understand even if they did."

"That might be true, but regardless..."

Annoyed at my hesitation, Devola crosses her legs and scowls.

"The Black Scrawl took another victim," she says. "That's three this month. It's spreading way too fast."

"Let's wait and see what happens."

"I'm tired of hearing you say that!"

Her shout makes me jump. Just a little–but enough for her to notice. Seeing that, her eyes suddenly open wide.

"I'm sorry, Sis. It's not your fault. I shouldn't have lashed out like that."

"It's okay. I understand."

"It's all going wrong. You can feel it too, right?"

"I..."

When I was first assigned to Project Gestalt, I was over the moon with pride.
But now, my chest hurts just to think about it. If it were to fail...

Before we knew it, the Replicants had gained a sense of self and the Black Scrawl started raging out of control.

It moved fast. So fast. Like wind.

Popola and I would go to the observation room and act like it was all okay. We'd talk to the Replicants as if we didn't have a care in the world. But at night, we'd just hold each other and share the horror of it all.

"I'm glad you were with me," murmurs Popola.

"I couldn't have handled being an observer all alone."

"We were able to endure because we had each other," I reply softly.

Did the humans see this coming? Is that why they made a twin model?
Were they really so clever? ...Were they really so cruel?
I couldn't have done this by myself. I would have descended into madness.
I simply couldn't bear such a burden all alone.

"When I get the chance, I'm going to try contacting another city," she says.

Maybe these abnormalities are a localized phenomenon."

"I pray that's the case," I reply. "Even if we're of no use ourselves, things will still work out if the other observers can pull through."

"Don't worry. It's going to be okay."

But it wasn't okay. Nothing was okay. All thanks to a pair of Devola and Popola models from another town.

The wind rubs my cheeks. The sand grazes my skin.
It's grown cold out here.
We walk with renewed purpose, hoping to make up for lost time.
Devola loses her balance every now and then. IT gets bad after a while.
I slip myself under her arm so she won't fall again and we press on.

"Is your leg all right?"

"Well, I doubt I'll be dancing anytime soon, but yeah. It's fine."

She smiles as she says this, but I can tell she doesn't have much left.
And yet, she continues to smile–all so I won't worry.

I remember when our Resistance allies injured her leg.
I was furious. Beyond fury. I wanted to scream and cry and lose myself in it.
But then she smiled, and all of that rage just...drifted away.

To think we have the same face, yet such different smiles.

One day, I realized how she reminded me of the martyrs I'd seen in old records.
That was the day we decided to leave our town forever.

[Record of Project Gestalt's End]

Our role as observers ended on the day Project Gestalt collapsed.
All due to the actions of Devola and Popola models from another town.

With the original Gestalt lost, humanity was doomed to an inevitable extinction.
Knowing this, we gathered what remaining Replicant data we could find and launched it to the surface of the moon. And though success was as unlikely as finding a lost sand grain in the desert, we still had to accept it. We still had to try. We were androids, you see. Protecting humanity was our instinct.

Other androids, beholden to that same instinct, began to direct their hate at the Devola and Popola models who'd snuffed out humanity.

It started small. A few off-hand remarks. The occasional glance.
But even the smallest things have weight, and with enough of them combined, that weight eventually becomes

a boulder. Emotions boiled over. Remarks became jeers.
And soon enough, my sister and I were the perfect target for persecution.

At first, we simply accepted the fact that our friends turned on us.
It was almost unavoidable, I suppose.
We were observers for Project Gestalt, after all.
And while we didn't cause it to fail, the people who did...
Well, they looked just like us.

So we accepted it. We took the resentment and scorn. We endured.
Because as crazy as it sounds, I think we actually felt...responsible.

We moved from town to town in an effort to avoid persecution.
But in one such town, my seemingly infinite patience finally broke.
My sister, Devola, met with unprovoked violence at the hands of a Resistance member.
She said something in response to his taunts. Something quiet.
And though her words were ambiguous, he slashed her leg nearly in two.

My vision narrowed. Everything went red. And then...she smiled at me.

"It's okay, Sis. There's nothing we can do."

But it was too late. My emotions were no longer in my control.
I'm simply not strong enough to stand aside and let the most important person in the world come to harm.

Devola and I left town that same day.

Violence like that wouldn't stop. It was going to happen again.
And it wouldn't be coming from just one person.

So rather than let them kill us, we ran.
I guess it was the greatest resistance I could muster.

We lose the sun as dark clouds gather overhead.
We continue our march.

A cold wind blasts us, stealing what little body heat we have left.
I smell rain in the air.
We continue our march.

Sometimes we hear animals howling in the distance. It makes us flinch every time.
But we continue our march, because even this is better than suffering at the hands of our fellow androids.

Why must we suffer this persecution? I know we're the same model as the androids who doomed humanity, so I understand that part. At least a little, anyway. But at the same time, we're not them. We're not the same.

We are who we are, and that Devola and Popola were who they were.
That's how I felt when I saw Devola being hurt.
I wanted to shout it at everyone. I wanted to scream.

As far as I'm concerned, there's only one Devola. And for her, there's only me. No one can take the other's place.

Rain falls from the sky.
It stimulates our sensation nerves like cold needles.

We need maintenance badly. But that's a pipe dream, I suppose.
No android would dare help a pair of outcasts like us.

"Are you cold, Devola?"

"I'm all right as long as you're with me, Sis."

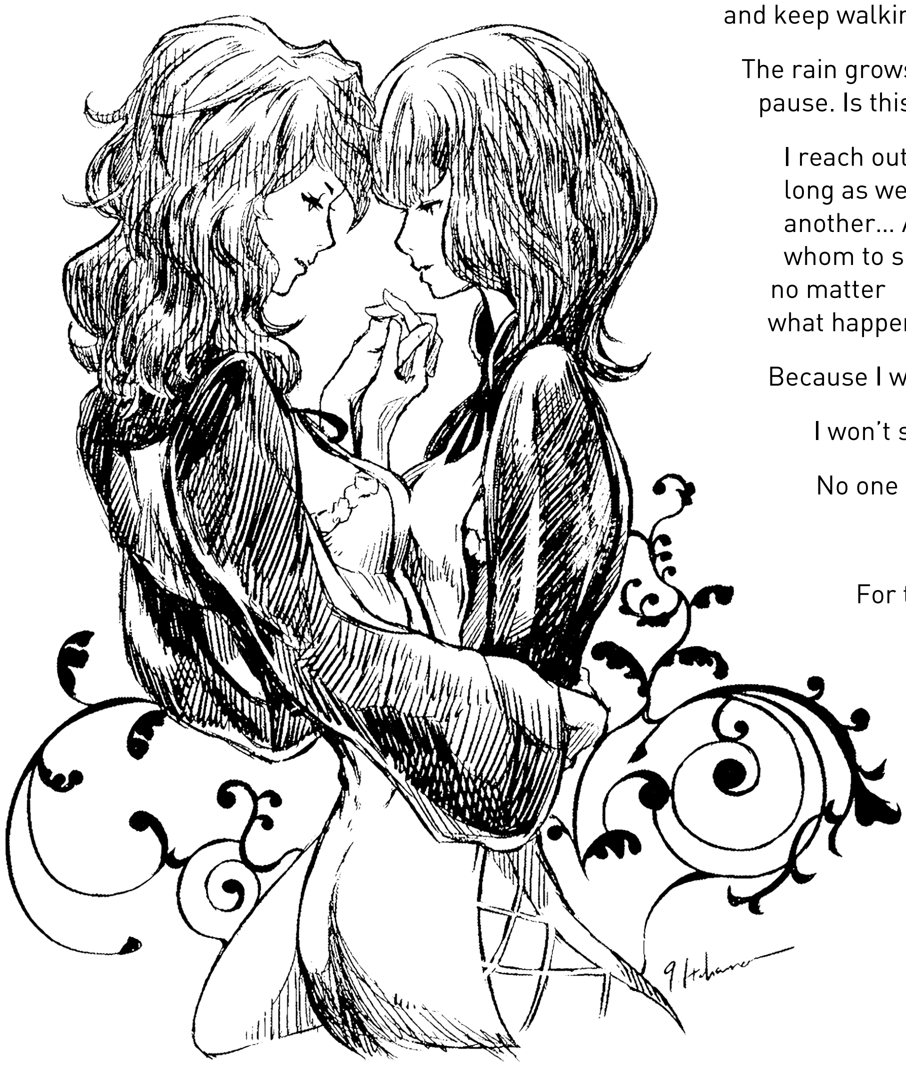
"I feel the same."

We press our bodies together to try and retain heat.
It's cold now. Much worse than the searing heat of midday.
But we just smile at each other and keep pressing on.
There's another camp on the other side of the desert. A new camp.
If we can just get there, I can finally fix Devola's leg.

And yet, I wonder if there's anywhere on this planet that will take us.

"Hey. What's wrong?"

"...It's nothing. Don't worry about it."



I do what I can to suppress the anxiety in my chest and keep walking.

The rain grows worse. It lashes at us without pause. Is this our punishment?

I reach out and support Devola's body. As long as we have bodies to support one another... As long as I have someone with whom to share my fate... Then I will press on, no matter
what happens to me.

Because I won't ever stop protecting her.

I won't stop.

No one stops.

For that is the fate we twin androids have been assigned.

Pod 153: The failure to manage the area resulted in the collapse of the Gestalt System, which led to the decimation of the human race. Due to the discovery of its instability, the Twin System was removed from future android production designs.

Following the incident, the Devola and Popola models were not dismantled.
However, in order to prevent further unexpected behavior, they underwent a memory wipe.

Furthermore, they were reprogrammed to generate constant feelings of guilt.

NieR Music Concert: Lies

Translation by /u/NeedsToGoToBed

Scene 1: Exchange Test

2B (Narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
We are perpetually trapped……In a neverending spiral of life and death.
Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment?
I often think about the god who blessed us with this cryptic puzzle
And wonder if we'll ever have to chance to kill him.

Operator 6O: Operator 6O to 2B. Can you hear me?

2B: I hear you.

Operator 6O: Roger that.
Now then, I think I'd like to initiate the scheduled tactical support unit exchange test.
You normally use Pod model 042, but this time, we'll be assigning 9S' 153 to you for a few days.

You were told this the other day, but this tactical support unit exchange is regularly used as a test to get information on the Pod; their usefulness, any problems they might have, that sort of thing.

It's called a "test," but just go about as you normally do.

2B: Understood.

Operator 6O: Ah, looks like there's a voice message from 9S, who's already proceeding with the test.
I'm playing it back for you now.

[The sound of data being played.]

9S: Ummm……hellooo? Can you hear me, ma'am*?
This is 9S. I'm doing my best on this exchange test with the unsociable Pod 042.

Pod 042: Negative: Tactical support units do not have emotions.
The expression "unsociable" is inappropriate.

9S: …is what I'm dealing with. Well, I'll try to enjoy it.
Ah, one more thing, ma'am. If you get tired of doing the test, please let me know right away. I'll do whatever I can to try suspending the te……

[The data replay is interrupted by a noise.]

Operator 6O: Ah…..ahaha….. Looks like the rest of it got erased by Command's censors.
….W-Well, good luck with the exchange test!

2B (Narration): Operator 6O ends the transmission, inviting silence.
Once the current task is confirmed, a nearby access point is displayed.
It looks like an investigation is necessary for a body transport function error.

Pod 153: Pod 153 to YoRHa unit 2B.

2B: What?

Pod 153: "Nice to meet you!"

2B: …..Huh?

Pod 153: "Nice to meet you!"

2B: ....What is that.....?

Pod 153: Report: a statement repeated in order to encourage a harmonious relationship between humans. In accordance with YoRHa unit 9S' specifications, this is to be repeated until a similar response has been received.

"Nice to meet you!"

2B: N.....Nice to...meet you....

Pod 153: Understood.

2B (Narration): If the exchange test continues like this, it looks to be the cause of unnecessary stress.
At a loss, I switched focus to the designated access point.......

On the way to the target access point, I passed a village of machines. It's a village of pacifists led by a machine named "Pascal."
In the distance, the children seem to be having fun, singing songs.
It has been confirmed many times that the machines here are strange individuals.
There are those who imitate families, those who talk of love, and the children.....

Despite being weapons created by the aliens, they have personalities.
Almost like humanity.....

[Short pause.]

2B (Narration): .....It is not permitted for YoRHa units to have emotions.
We are models specialized for combat, after all.
It is the most efficient, most correct choice.
But, in doing so, I feel that something unseen in the heart is lost.
Was our choice truly the correct one?
Who would be considered a fitting existence in this world?
Listening to the song of the children, I continued to walk the dark path alone.....

Pascal: Ahh......and there. I'll be intruding for a bit......
Hello. My name is Pascal. I'm currently the chief of a village in which those who are tired of fighting have been gathered. What about all of you here, on these grounds?

[Pascal speaks as if he's talking to everyone at the venue.]

Pascal: Are you not tired of fighting day in and day out?
Being given orders by someone, overworking yourselves? ......If you work too hard, whether you're a machine lifeform or a human, you'll end up broken.
Ah, that's right. Why don't I teach you something nice?

When times are hard, or you feel saddened, sing a song. If you do, you'll feel better. What kind of song, you wonder? ......Hmm.......for example, a song like this.

Scene 2: Access Point

Pod 153: Arrival at access point marked for investigation.

2B: Check the transmission status and body storage function along with the transport system.

Pod 153: Understood.

2B (Narration): The designated access point was located in the desert's open area.
Amidst the sand-laden wind, the Pod's transmission light is quietly flickering.
I was unable to see any signs of damage to the outer casing of the access point, so it must be an internal malfunction. If it's the Pod, the problem should be resolved shortly.

The sand-laden winds become stronger, obscuring the sun's rays.
In order to keep watch over the surrounding area, I climbed a nearby rocky area.

Pod 153: Body storage function and transmission status check complete.
Report: Malfunction in body reconstruction unit detected.

2B: Repair it.

Pod 153: Understood.

2B (Narration): My field of vision worsens as the wind becomes a sandstorm.
I can see the silhouettes of the old world remains made of stone here and there.
A strong wind carries the sand.

Pod 153: Repairs on body reconstruction unit. 50% complete.

2B (Narration): Squinting my eyes at the occasional strong wind, [light hitting noise], I felt something touch my feet. It was a small flower that I recognized.
I remember sending a picture of this flower to Operator 6O before.

Operator 6O: So this is a desert rose, huh? It seems almost...mystical.

2B (Narration): That's what she'd said from the above orbit base, pleased.

Operator 6O: There must just be a bounty of nature down there, huh?

2B: ......Some, yes. I've seen lilies, cherry blossoms, daffodils, and even lunar tears.
I'll try to send more if I can.

Operator 6O: Thank you so much! I'm going to treasure this picture forever! Oh, and I'm going to send you a proper thank-you mail later, so keep an eye out for it. Bye!

2B (Narration): ......I didn't know until later, but the "desert rose" is a crystal made of minerals, not a plant. Still, Operator 6O's smiling face on the transmission screen...
...I remember she looked really happy.

Pod 153: Report: Repairs to malfunction in body storage unit complete.

2B (Narration): I went to do a final check on the access point after receiving the work completion report from Pod.
The foundational framework, the resinous material composing the body, even the small systems for weaponry production look to be in working order.......

(There's a nuance of suspicion coloring her final words.
As if to punctuate 2B's words, Pod reports.)

Pod 153: Report: Hostile machine lifeform signals detected.

2B: Understood. I'll eliminate them.

Pod 153: Signal count increasing. 24, 26, 29.....

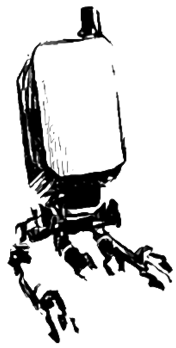
2B: ......With those numbers, just where have they been this whole time......!!

Pod 153: Signal count once again increasing. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.

2B (Narration): It wasn't that such a large number of machine lifeforms was approaching.
From the start, they'd hidden in the sand, waiting in a suspended state to ambush us.
That could only mean one thing.

(Pause for a bit.)

2B (Narration): .....This was an orchestrated trap.



Scene 3: Betrayal

(2B attacks the last enemy, her breathing ragged.)

2B: !! ....(heavy breathing noises)......

Pod 153: Destruction of all enemy machine lifeforms confirmed.

Operator 6O (Narration): After fighting against 34 medium-sized machine lifeforms, 2B somehow managed to stand up without collapsing despite her lightheadedness. Having lost two weapons and several of her sensors, she was restricted in how much she could self-repair.

Pod 153: Alert: Combat damage accumulation on YoRHa unit 2B.
Proposal: Appropriate, repairs if treatment, exhaustion quality no exchange.......

Operator 6O (Narration): Pod 153's voice garbles with noise. In the air, the Pod's arms move in a disoriented fashion, like it's convulsing. The blinking of its light shows the irregular state of its internal systems.

2B: What.....Pod? What's wrong?

Pod 153: Appropriate, re pairs REpairs treatment to sy0 m0.......h1........

(After 10 seconds of silence, suddenly, the Pod begins to speak at high speed.)

Pod 153: Deploying long range weaponry. Activating FFCS.
YoRHa unit 2B recognized as enemy android.
Proposal to suspend tactile support mission. Acknowledged. Begin attack.

2B: Pod!!

Operator 6O (Narration): A high-speed energy bullet the weapon-deployed Pod fires.
2B just barely avoids the attack.

2B: Pod 153! What are you doing!?

Pod 153: Unable to confirm destruction of enemy android.
Begin construction of firing correction program. Construction complete.
Request: Application of gravity control sphere. Permission granted.

Operator 6O (Narration): Without permission from either a YoRHa unit or Command, a Pod can't use its weaponry.
However, Pod 153 has an internal bypass to its own recognition process applied.

Pod 153:	Firing gravity control sphere.
2B:	Ghh......!!!!
Operator 60 (Narration):	2B avoids the Pod's released gravity attack. But her right leg is caught in the radius of the hemisphere.
Pod 153:	Long range attack system. High output charge. Preparing concentrated laser attack.
Operator 60 (Narration):	The Pod's weapon deploys once more, turning and aiming at 2B, who can no longer move.
2B:	Uu.......aaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh!!
Operator 60 (Narration):	2B swings her sword down on her own right leg, intending to sever it.
	(At the same time 2B cuts her leg off, Pod fires its laser.)
2B:	Gaaah!!!
Pod 153:	Firing high output laser.
	(2B tosses her sword at the Pod. It hits its mark, damaging 153.)
2B:	......!!
Pod 153:	(dying robot sounds)
Operator 60 (Narration):	2B, who'd narrowly escaped the attack, tossed the sword she'd used to slice off her right leg as a counter attack on Pod 153.
Pod 153:	YoRHa unit 2Bi.......tactile......un......
Operator 60 (Narration):	About 15 seconds after convulsions from the Pod, who'd taken a direct hit from the sword, it emitted a strange noise and stopped. That sound was..... high-pitched laughter, like a child's voice......

Scene 4: Message

2B (Narration):	After taking down the rampaging Pod, I was stuck there, unable to move. There seemed to be no way to easily repair the heavily damaged leg. As I made my way over to the fallen Pod in something akin to a crawl, the Pod's speaker activated.
Operator 60:	Operator 60 to 2B! 2B! Can you hear me? Are you okay!?
2B:	......This is 2B. I hear you.
Operator 60:	Aah, 2B. Thank goodness...... I was monitoring you from here, but Pod 153's attack mode suddenly became impossible to control. But the control program can only be rewritten with a code by the Pod's original support target, 9S.......
2B:	Operator 60.
Operator 60:	Could it be that 9S was trying to.....But, for 9S, of all people, to implant an attack order in the Pod and aim it at you is—

(2B shouts to interrupt her words.)

2B: Operator 6O!!

Operator 6O: .....Yes? What is it?

2B: How long.....

Operator 6O: Come again?

2B: How long have you been there?

Operator 6O: Um....I'm not sure what you mean....

2B: The access point's transmission functions have yet to be repaired.

Operator 6O: ......Huh?

2B: When I went in to do a final check on the body reconstruction unit, there was a small machine fragment remaining inside.

I immediately judged the rusted piece to be part of a machine lifeform.
It seemed odd, so I left the computer terminal's final activation untouched.

Operator 6O: ....

2B: A laser transmission would have also been impossible in the sandstorm. In other words, you shouldn't be capable of communicating with me from the above orbit satellite.

Operator 6O?: ....

2B: The one in Pod 153 right now....who are you?

(8 seconds of silence.)

???: .....Fufu......fufufufufu. Hey, she figured it out.

She sure did!

Ahh. And here I thought it'd be interesting to pin it all on 9S and watch them fall apart.
I thought it'd be interesting, you know?

What a bummer.

A real bummer.

(Operator 6O speaks as if there are two people.)

???: We are a unified body of thought.
We are numerous and singular.
But 2B, I wonder if it's really our fault?

2B: What are you talking about......

???: This incident might've been 9S' work, you know.
Maybe he really had decided to kill you.

2B: ....

(2B shakes with anger, her breathing uneven.)

???: The likelihood of YoRHa unit 9S accessing confidential information was high.
That's why it was determined that an E model would deal out punishment.
He might've realized, you know?
That the 2B who's killed 9S time and time again....is you, No.2 Type E.

2B:	....Ahh!!
Pod 153 (Narration):	2B picks up her leg, which had fallen to the ground, and strikes the Pod with it. The struck Pod, while rotating strangely, slowly falls to the sand, all functions ceased.
2B:	......I........I........
Pod 153 (Narration):	The sandstorm had subsided. The desert was once again bathed in the sun's light.
Operator 6O?:	.......Hello? Hello, 2B, can you hear me? 2B!? Are you okay!? 2B! Please answer!!
2B:	......This is 2B. I hear you.
Operator 6O:	Ah.....thank goodness.....I suddenly couldn't contact you using the electromagnetic communications system, and due to the sandstorm, I couldn't use laser transmissions either and I was thinking, "what if there's an enemy attack?"......Then finally, laser communications came back up.....
2B:	......
Operator 6O:	.....2B? Are you okay?
2B (Narration):	".....I'm okay. It's...nothing." That's what I answered. (Short pause.)
2B (Narration):	Was it because I didn't want to worry Operator 6O? Or maybe...... I was afraid of seeing my own darkness? I still don't know. If I look up, a white, bright, radiant sky would be stretched before me. As if it's looking down on me. As if it's condemning me for continuing to kill 9S......
Pod 153 (Narration):	Everything that lives is designed to end. "They" are perpetually trapped..... In a neverending spiral of life and death.
Operator 6O (Narration):	But we were all born here. That's why, in this place, we continue to live.
2B (Narration):	No matter what lies pile up No matter what crimes are committed Even if the moment we are forgiven never comes to pass...... We will continue to fight.
All (Narration):	We will continue to fight. We will continue to fight! We will continue to fight!!
2B (Narration):	Until the day when punishment rains down......

Orbital Bunker Observation Diary

Translation by /u/ilfans

> A short Story about life in the Bunker, taking place the 10th of February 11945.
> This English version was brought to you by ilfans.

[TB 13:30]

WHERE IS THIS?

WHO IS THAT?

2B likens it to trying to climb up a rocky slope.

Her left leg feels heavier than lead, and with just one step, she's already winded. When she's finally able to complete that step, her right leg's joints are the next to begin creaking.

From practically tumbling out of the flight unit, exiting the hangar, riding the elevator, and finally to reaching the hallway, the distance is only about a few meters. But when she thinks about the amount of time it takes her to do just that, she's dumbfounded. The Development Department is right at the end of this hallway. Thinking about how much longer it'll take to get there, 2B feels as though she's going to faint.

The orbiting Bunker is the front-line base for YoRHa troops. Although it contains all the necessary facilities for battle and travel between itself and the Earth, as well as living spaces for its inhabitants, it can't really be considered big. Nevertheless, 2B feels as though the distance between herself and her destination is endless. As the floor is merely a gradual slope, there aren't even any steps for her to overcome, so it's a place that should be so easy to walk in that one could do it with their eyes closed.

This only acts as proof that the current problems with her motor functions are serious. She tries to up her pace a little, as she thinks about how badly she needs to reach the Development Department for repairs.

Just then, the Commander approaches her from the front. 2B attempts to move her left hand to her chest for a salute, but she can't even manage that correctly. She grimaces, as it seems that the malfunctions weren't only in her legs like she'd thought, but her arms as well.

"It's all right. At ease."

She'd noticed the extent of 2B's damage through that awkward attempt at a salute, and she gestures for her to lower her arm.

"You look to be in pretty bad shape."

"I wasn't able to receive the necessary repairs on the ground, so I was forced to suspend the mission in order to return here for them. I apologize."

"Your apology is unnecessary. Are there others who've been injured?"

"Due to the battle that broke out with the machine lifeforms during the early morning, 1D has taken damage to her right arm and shoulder, and 4B's left thigh has sustained a minor injury. However, 12H's first-aid treatment has managed to repair them so that the operation would not be hindered."

"I see."

With that, the Commander moves to the side, out of 2B's line of sight. This hallway, which connects the hangar to the Development Department, faces the "outside". The darkness of space, the scattered stars, and of course, mankind's original home, Earth, can all be seen from the windows.

Even now, upon that beautiful blue planet, YoRHa androids were engaging in combat against the machine lifeforms. No matter how many times they crush them, just like little mechanical bugs, the machine lifeforms tirelessly reappear.

"There just aren't enough YoRHa troops to handle the number of machine lifeforms ... But calling them the elite few sounds nice, I think."

Although there's an overwhelming difference in their numbers, androids have been able to make up for it through strategy and updated technology. However, they have yet to fully overcome their disadvantage, and thus the fighting has been prolonged. 2B believed that maybe, if they were to just push their efforts further, it could all end, but she realized she was wrong in that idea.

"Just make sure you don't push yourself," the Commander says, her lips forming a smile.

Occasionally, the Commander smiles in such a gentle fashion that it confuses 2B. After all, she tends to be rather cold, her speech is usually as rigid as one would expect from a leader, and her judgment is as sharp as a blade. There were probably countless amounts of anguish and conflict hidden in the depths of that occasional smile.

"Commander ..."

2B stops herself from finishing her thought. This is her problem, not the Commander's.

"Never mind. It was nothing."

The Commander's smile vanishes, before quiet words escape her lips.

"No matter how cruel the mission, we must complete it. That is the duty of us YoRHa members."

Those final words echo within 2B's mind. There've always been difficult times for her, or even times when things were so painful, she couldn't stand it. But 2B has never been dissatisfied with her duties.

"However, no matter the mission, all responsibility for it lies on my shoulders. Do not forget that."

It's as though the Commander was able to read her mind. 2B had always been thinking that the weight she'd accumulated each time she finished one of her duties was hers and hers alone to carry. No, even now, she still believes that. Even so, the Commander's words echo within her heart.

"Glory to mankind."

This time, 2B manages to salute properly.

"Glory to mankind," the Commander repeats in kind.

2B fights under her command. She always has, and she always will. Until the day Mother Earth returns to the hands of its rightful owners, mankind.

As she listens to the Commander's systematic footsteps fade behind her, 2B continues on towards the Development Department's room.

WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?

WHAT WAS THAT? JUST NOW?

SHOULD WE FOLLOW HER?

LET'S FOLLOW HER!

[TB 13:40]

As the Commander enters the command room, she finds that she can't walk another step. A bunch of operators have rushed over to her and blocked the route.

"Commander! About the arrangement of materials in the Bunker ..."

"Please allow me to report the situation in the city ruins ..."

"Please approve the supply container to be sent to the moon ..."

"It appears the transmission bandwidth in Sector F Ward 3d is failing ..."

It seems that the operators believe that if one merely holds the title of "Commander" then that means their processing power must be higher than anyone else.

"With regards to the material arrangement, submit a map presenting three plans that consider the movements of everyone in charge. After you've done that, I'll consider it."

"Understood!"

"I'll listen to your situation report in 330 seconds."

"Understood!"

"Supply container approved."

"Thank you very much!"

"Direct any troops in the F sector to move to the access point and investigate the cause."

"Understood!"

"Finally, that's finished ..." the Commander thinks to herself, but in actuality, it's not. None of the operators move from where they're standing. It seems there's still something they need.

"Is there something else?"

"Yes," the operators answer in unison.

"Commander! Please accept this!"

All at once, they present her with small gold and silver packages.

"What are these?"

"Today is February 14th! That date is also known as Valentine's Day, which is a day where you give brown objects to those you adore!"

"Valentine's Day? A custom from the Old World?"

"Yes! It appears that both the senders and receivers of gifts were made very happy by it. It also appears that it was customary to give brown objects wrapped in gold and silver paper."

"Ah, no wonder," the Commander thinks to herself. All their packages are different shapes and sizes, but all of them shine brilliantly. Indeed, it seems that humans gave presents like this long ago.

She opens one of the presents to test out its contents, and it ends up being a dark brown ribbon. She wonders what to do with it, but for the time being, answers with a "thank you" instead of voicing that.

Many of the customs of the Old World elude her. While humans are the ones who created androids, it's ridiculous that they try to understand them, and not recommended that they mimic them. Therefore, she cannot officially authorize this attempt at mimicking Valentine's Day customs, but ...

She won't say such cold things for now. The operators here have very different hardships from those units fighting on the front lines.

"Commander, um ... may I ask for your permission on something?"

The one who asked that is an operator known as 6O, the one in charge of communications with 2B.

"What is it?"

"I'd like for your approval on experiments regarding implementing new equipment for flight units."

Regarding the matter of new equipment, the Commander had received reports from the Development Department several times about that. When dealing with experiments like this, a back and forth between operators and other members is required. It seems that 6O here is in charge of compiling those communications.

"Ah, yes. That. The preliminary investigation. The one who was assigned to that operation was ..."

"9S, ma'am. If no problems occur with the preliminary investigation, it'll be the descent force's final experiment."

Upon hearing that, the image of 2B from not long ago appears on her mind.

"I see, 9S ... That's right."

The words that she'd repeated so many times before echo within her heart, "all responsibility lies on my shoulders".

"Approved."

"Thank you very much!"

60 gives a bow and leaves the room. The Commander then turns her head to look over her shoulder.

"Now then ..."

It's been exactly 330 seconds.

"Let's hear that situation report on the battleground."

BATTLEGROUND? SITUATION REPORT?

BATTLE ON THE GROUND? TO REPORT ON THE SITUATION, RIGHT?

AH. WHAT DOES NEW EQUIPMENT MEAN?

WE DON'T UNDERSTAND.

SHOULD WE TAKE A LOOK?

LET'S TAKE A LOOK!

[TB 14:00]

Operator 60 rushes to the hangar. She believes she'll be in trouble if she misses them. Well, actually, if she does, she can just contact them through a transmission, so she won't be in that big of trouble.

She slides herself through the door she'd just opened — it feels like the more in a hurry she is, the more slowly it opens. Because quick movement is necessary for a quick installation, she believes it's a point of hers that she should improve on.

"210, are you there?"

From behind a flight unit equipped with a catapult, 210's face emerges. She's still in the middle of her inspection work, it seems. What good timing. 60 immediately gets down to business.

"The implementation experiment's been approved!"

However, 210's reaction is unexpectedly weak. 60 wonders if she's just forgotten about what the experiment entails.

"You know, the new equipment? For the flight unit!"

210 knits her eyebrows in an almost shocked expression.

"That's all?"

"What do you mean ... that's all?"

This time, it's 60's turn to show a strange expression on her face.
She can't figure out what's up with 210's expression.

"You could've just told me that through one single transmission.
You didn't have to come all the way here."

"Yeah, but ..."

210 wears an expression that suggests she believes she's done something useless, while 60 tries to think of how to refute that.

"But, but! We're always just talking through transmissions; I need more exercise!"

210 raises an eyebrow at that, as if to say, "so, what?"

"And besides! Isn't it more important to check the actual equipment with my own eyes?
What is it we say again ... It's our duty? To do it perfectly? Er, what was it ... um ..."

"It's the duty of us operators to carry out everything we do with perfection."

"Right, that was it!"

21O finally nods her head at 6O's spirited response.

"I guess you're right. Whenever he asks about new equipment, he seems guilty.
9S is just a ball of curiosity."

21O's tone may sound like she's verbally shrugging her shoulders, but in actuality, it's meant to be gentleness. She's always like this when she talks about the unit she's in charge of, 9S.

6O leans over, suggesting she understands just what she means. Even though they serve different units, operators share the same sorts of feelings.

"2B's the same way, always doing unreasonable things."

S-Type's tend to be guilty due to their intense curiosity, while B-Types are guilty of their lack of consideration for themselves. Though that's probably why they're able to fight on the front lines without hesitation.

"I guess you could say they're running us ragged."

"I get that there's no helping their characteristics, however ..."

"You wish they'd act with a little more restraint, right?"

"But even if we tell them that ..."

"It won't change a thing!"

"So," the two of them speak in unison. "Advanced preparations are especially important!"

As is the exchange of information between operators. Even if it's an insignificant conversation, there could be information within it. The accumulation of all that meager information could inform important decisions, or help units avoid danger. In short, everything in an operator's everyday life can connect back to a mission. Every day is their duty.

After checking some notes and making changes to the new equipment, the two of them chat a bit. Of course, 21O never stops working, however.

"Okay, sorry to keep you waiting."

21O returns the flight unit to a fixed position after the inspection and makes room for 6O. Since the catapult can only be equipped to one flight unit at a time, they'll have to be checked one by one.

"Well then, I'll go ahead and contact 9S."

"Okay! I'll leave you to that."

6O fixes 2B's flight unit in the open space and begins her inspection work.

THAT MACHINE SURE IS BIG!

IS THAT THE NEW EQUIPMENT?

WHERE SHOULD WE GO NEXT?

WHERE SHOULD WE GO NEXT?

[TB 14:30]

Locating 9S is an easy task for Operator 21O. When he's on Earth, there may be issues with the satellite resolution or the communication area, so sometimes the position information can be wrong. However, when he's within the Bunker, there's no mistake. "9S is right here," 21O thinks to herself, as she stands in front of the door.

The server control room — the room within the Bunker where a large terminal is installed. 9S has been in here analyzing enemy barriers and new hacking patterns. He loves that sort of detail work.

Whenever he isn't being sent out on missions, he's always, always, always guaranteed to be working in this room. Due to his intense concentration, he doesn't even hear the door opening.

"I knew it," 21O mutters, as she enters the room, without even gaining the attention of 9S, who's focused on the terminal. Despite being unable to see his eyes, she's sure they're shining as he immerses himself in his work.

Often, human beings seem to have become absorbed in the act of playing with their toys, forgetting about time entirely, and that's exactly how 9S feels in this very moment.

Even before heading to the hangar, 21O had stopped by here. Since he seemed so absorbed in his work, she didn't call out to him, but even at that point in time, he'd already been in the room for over three hours.

She feels as though she should tell him to cut it out and take a break already, but suddenly, his shoulders tremble in shock like someone had just come up from behind him and shouted in his ear.

> "Oh, it's just you, operator."

He drops his shoulders and turns his gaze towards 21O.

> "What do you mean 'it's just you'? You've been working in here without even a single break for how many hours now? You need to quit doing that sort of thing."

> "Yeah, yeah."

> "One confirmation will suffice."

> "Fiiiine," he responds, as though he's dissatisfied.

> "Please disconnect from the terminal. I need to brief you on your next mission."

> "Seriously? I can just listen like this!"

> "That's unacceptable. You won't get sufficient exercise like that."

Suddenly she finds herself diverting the conversation in the same way 6O did not long ago.
Though it is true that 9S requires exercise more than 6O does.

> "Let's take a little walk."

9S reluctantly disconnects from the terminal.

> "Soooo, where's the next mission?"

> "Within the factory ruins. You'll need to survey the ruins as well as their surroundings."

> "So that means I'll be alone again, huh? Sure, is lonely like that."

9S drops his shoulders in a manner that suggests he's uninterested, but in the next moment, he lifts his head to look over at 21O.

> "Think you could come with me, operator?"

21O knows he's not being serious with that. It may be true that he's lonely, but bringing an operator along on a mission is completely out of the question.

> "Absolutely not. This is your job.
> Stop behaving like a child and just complete it on your own like you're supposed to."

> "All right, all right! Sheesh ..."

9S puffs his cheeks up. She can hear he's a bit disheartened. She wonders if she should give him some "candy" to cheer him up.

> "The next mission will also serve as an experiment for the newly implemented equipment."

> "Wait, really?!"

She can hear the liveliness in his voice now. Just as she thought, the word "new" would have tremendous effect on him.

> "I'll provide you with a more detailed explanation in the hangar while
> we check out the equipment."

"All right!"

Suddenly, 9S makes a strange expression, like he's taken aback by something.

"Is something wrong?"

Come to think of it, he seemed a bit strange a little while back, as well. She'd thought it was because she surprised him by suddenly being in the room with him, but at the time, his gaze wasn't even facing towards her, but in another direction entirely. Something else had his attention.



"Er, I just feel kind of uneasy."

"About what?"

9S turns his gaze towards the interior of the room, like he feels as though someone's watching him from it. He shakes his head a few moments later.

"No, there's no way. It's probably just my imagination. I wonder if I'm tired or something ..."

"That's why I've been telling you to take regular breaks."

"Yeah, yeah."

"One confirmation will suffice!"

After finishing the explanation of the new equipment, she'll have to remind him again to rest. If his fatigue accumulates, it may compromise the mission.

While thinking about that, she and 9S leave the server control room. But before she leaves entirely, she turns to look about the room one last time. Of course, there's no one there.

`That was a close one!`

`We were almost caught!`

`But what does "lonely" mean?`

`No idea!`

`Androids are just full of mysteries, aren't they?`

`That's right. Full of mysteries ... and very interesting.`

`We want to play with them a little more.`

`Yes ... Play with them a little more.`

Two words appear on the large terminal within the server control room, despite the complete lack of anyone's presence.

`End Transmission.`

NieR:Automata Story Summary

March 10: The 243rd Descent Operation is carried out to destroy a Goliath-class machine in the Abandoned Factory. Six YoRHa units, including 2B, are descending into the atmosphere. While leading the aerial units towards the abandoned factory, 2B's comrades begin steadily dropping like flies...

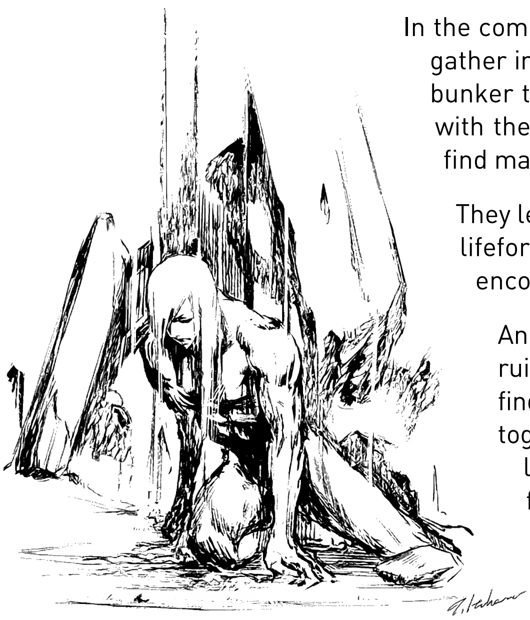
On the ground, 9S is assigned to support the YoRHa by disabling the defense system at the enemy base. He boards an aerial unit to make contact with the enemy defenses.

Even with four units shot down during the descent and one MIA, the operation must proceed with 2B alone. Inside the factory, a gigantic defensive weapon resembling heavy machinery lies in wait. 9S destroys the giant weapon attacking 2B and appears before her. He's investigating the factory exterior with the flight unit. She heads into the factory in search of colossal weaponry. She fails to find her objective. Just as she is about to give up, it finds her—two colossal weapons attack.

It looked as if 2B has defeated her attackers. However, they reactivate and combine with the factory itself to reveal their true form. She takes on the massive foe over the bridge. The fight proves a struggle due to their overwhelming difference in size. To support her, 9S tries to hack the machine's nervous system. Though heavily wounded in the attempt to protect her, he is able to take control of its upper arm with his Pod.

2B receives the flight unit from 9S and uses it to mount an aerial assault on the colossal weaponry.

When finally defeated, other similar machines rise from underwater. The situation seems hopeless. They decide to use their black boxes to destroy the enemy herd. The two androids' bodies are lost in the blast, but their data was loaded into new ones, allowing them to be reactivated. 2B wakes up in the YoRHa forces' satellite station in the bunker, 9S by her side, helping with her reboot setup process.



In the command room, the YoRHa commander gives the order to contact and gather information on the Resistance on the ground. 2B and 9S fly from the bunker to the City Ruins. Landing at the Resistance camp, they soon meet with the Resistance leader, Anemone. When they arrive at the camp, they find many androids who need their help.

They leave the Resistance camp behind to pursue and take down machine lifeforms in the desert. However, oddly enough, the machine they encounter are capable of speech and wear clothing.

An uncountable number of android corpses were left abandoned in the ruins of what had once been an apartment complex. Here, our squad finds a group of erratically-moving machine lifeforms who form up together to make a cocoon, from which one boy is born—a machine lifeform bearing a strong resemblance to androids. After trying to fight the newborn machine, 2B and 9S are forced to escape from the collapsing grotto. They then receive a transmission from the Bunker with orders to search for a missing YoRHa party.

April 7: The allies' signal originated from the disquieting ruins of an amusement park. There, machine lifeforms dressed up as clowns sing and dance merrily. In the amusement park square, they are welcomed by a machine lifeform in the form of an old-world tank.

They end up dropping into a theatre where they expect to find their allies. The curtain rises in the darkness to reveal a fearsome machine, wrapped in android bodies... who begins to sing. During the fight, the Goliath-class machine tries to hack 2B. Fortunately, 9S quickly launch a counter-attack and they are able to destroy the machine without too much difficulties.

Read more about the Songstress with this short story: Memories of a Songstress on page 522.

On their way back, a machine lifeform bearing a white flag awaits them at the entrance. They are invited to come and meet with an individual calling himself "Pascal", the leader of a peaceful machine village.

Pascal introduced himself to the two androids who still express some doubt. But after visiting the village and its people, they are convinced of Pascal's well-meaning.

Upon leaving Pascal's village, 2B and her allies receive a report of a giant machine lifeform in the city ruins. They take a flight unit over to intercept it.

They fight against Goliath-class machine lifeforms. The enemy launched a self-destruct attack, resulting in the formation of a large sinkhole. At the same time, an alien signal, which had not been picked up in centuries, is detected. Following the signal, 2B and 9S head down and find what appears to be an alien mothership. Inside it, they are shocked to find a desiccated alien corpse. Then, before their eyes, appear two machines born in the desert cave: Adam and Eve.

2B and 9S return to the bunker to report to the commander that the machines had killed the aliens years ago. She orders them to gather intelligence on machine lifeforms. According to Pascal, off-network machines have established a nation in the depths of the woods. On their way to this forest area, they pass through the Shopping Center where they find a strange rolling machine that quickly runs off.

Read more about Emil with this short story: Emil's Recollection on page 530.

They finally arrive in the forest where armored machine lifeforms attack them, calling out in unison for their King. The two androids arrive at the castle of this presumed "King" and are looking for the throne room. There, they find that their leader is an infant machine lifeform. Suddenly, a mysterious android appears before them, killing the infant in one strike. The commander immediately warns 2B and 9S about this allegedly rogue android called A2. They fight her for a while before she runs away, warning the two androids about the secrets commander keeps to herself.

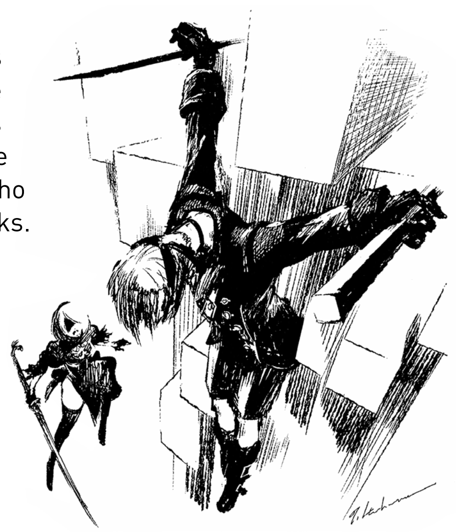
9S reports on A2 to Pascal. He also has records of her, but they don't offer much information beyond that she is dangerous.

Read more about A2 with this recital: NieR Music Concert: Beasts of Slaughter on page 524.

May 2: They both return to the Resistance camp to check their data and refuel. Under request from Anemone, they then head to the Flooded City to protect the android army carrier. Receiving word that the seaward carrier is under attack, they requisition flight units and repel the enemy forces.

A machine larger than any YoRHa units have ever seen appears from the depths of the ocean. Held off by a powerful electromagnetic field, they try to fight back with an interception mortar. The huge machine is finally destroyed, but launch a powerful EMP attack. The signal is lost between the androids and the bunker.

Waking up, 2B sets out to find the missing 9S. She receives information about a particular scanner from Anemone, sensible enough to detect his faint black box signal. Following 9S' signal, she goes back to the large sinkhole she has explored before and reaches a white crystal city in its depths. Adam appears; he built this city out of an interest in humanity. He challenges 2B to fight so that he might understand death. Meanwhile, 9S who is broken down by the shockwave, wanders among his own memory banks. Adam gets pierce by 2B's sword; he finally experiences death since he disconnected himself from the machine network earlier.



9S wonders if he may have been infected with a virus while held captive by Adam. He performs an extensive verification of his own systems for a possible data overhaul. Right before stopping, he senses a strange data noise which leads him to investigate the Bunker's main server. There, he discovers various documents that make him questions YoRHa true objective.

While he verifies himself back in the Bunker, 2B goes on a mission with Pascal for peace negotiations. A strange cult of religious machines has taken home inside the abandoned factory. However, they are aggressive and attack 2B and Pascal once they are held captive in the depths of the factory.

Waking up in his quarters at the Bunker, 9S hears from his Operator that 2B has requested support. To help her and Pascal, he hacks into the abandoned factory from a large terminal. Back in the factory, 2B encounters a large, many-legged weapon while escaping. Attacks can't penetrate its powerful energy shield. 9S hacks into the factory system to disable it. He then stops hacking after confirming the destruction of the weapon.

Right after leaving the terminal, he is called by commander, and reports the incoherent data he discovered in the main server. The commander tells the trembling 9S the truth: Humanity is truly extinct, long before the alien invaded Earth.

He is disturbed by this revelation. He gets an urgent order to his battle station, as if to drown out his troubled thoughts. After taking a flight unit from the battle station, he takes off from the Bunker. 2B, on the ground, goes to save the Resistance from berserk machine lifeforms. Those machines are preying on the androids.



Waiting in the City Ruins is a large multi-legged weapon that attacks with electrical discharges. 9S flies in during the fight against that machine, dropping from his flight for a direct attack. The weapon is silenced, but from its husk appears Eve. He is driven wild with hate after losing Adam and he made the machine lifeforms on the network savage.

The two androids hurry to Pascal's village after receiving a distress signal from its leader. Berserk machine lifeforms have invaded the village. After taking care of that, they go into battle with Eve to destroy him and end the machine rampage. After the fight, 9S is infected from hacking Eve. 2B decides to put him out of his misery with her own hands.

They both return to the Bunker. Dressed in armor, 2B sets out to plunge herself into a new battle... With Adam and Eve—the backbone of the network—gone and the machines' chain of command thrown into chaos, the android army proceeds with their large-scale ground invasion. 9S still hasn't shared the truth about humanity with anyone, not even 2B.

July 26: To cripple the machines' aerial defense system, 9S hacks into it along with the scanner squad.

2B and he are again teaming up, acting as a guerilla force to assist the front line troops in claiming the territory. Triggered by an enemy EMP attack, YoRHa units are corroded by a logic virus. 2B and 9S are forced to turn their weapons on their own comrades to survive. Forced to blow their own black boxes, 2B wakes in her quarters in the Bunker. She reported the situation to the commander with her partner, but the place was already infected. The two androids escape the lost Bunker which explodes with its commander still inside. 9S and 2B are now the only remaining members of YoRHa. After re-entry into Earth's atmosphere, they are knocked out of the air by corrupted flight units. 2B decides to split up with 9S and send him to safety. While fighting off pursuing machines, she notices that the virus is eating her own body. She determines that in order to keep the virus from spreading, she must drag her corrupted body to the Commercial Center. There, she is saved by A2. She asks her to accept her dying wish: to take care of the future, and especially 9S.

Speaking of which, 9S lands on the ground and heads towards 2B black box signal. There, he sees A2—and 2B on her last legs. She cuts her hair out of respect for the model which shared her personality. He is knocked unconscious by the collapsing landform; an immense, white structure raises from the ground and overhangs the entire city. Pod 042 receives 2B's final order to support A2.

Two weeks later, A2 wakes up in the Shopping Center ruins. She heads to the desert to encounter a large machine, resenting the Pod clinging to her all the while. She destroys the machine, but is disheartened when a

colossal, interlocking machine appears from the sand. Struggling, she goes into B Mode to fight it. Having suffered an overload during the battle with the machine, A2 reboots. She goes to the Resistance camp to change her fuel filter where she meets with Anemone for the first time since The Pearl Harbor Descent. Her old friend refers her to Pascal.

Read more about A2 reboot in "10th July, 11945 – A2's boot log", on page 521.

A2 relationship with machine lifeform is quite limited. Despite her reluctance to simply talk to Pascal, she slowly grows closer to him and the village's children. She even accepts to build a slide for them.

Pascal is spending uneventful days tending to the children... Until suddenly, a strange sound blared out from afar, threatening to shatter his peaceful life. A2, having gathered the materials Pascal requested, was just about to return to the village when she received an alarming message from Pascal. She arrives back to the village to find a group of cannibal machine lifeforms. Fortunately, Pascal and the children already escaped to the abandoned factory. A2 goes, learns of a large group of enemies, and moves to intercept them. But something far worse awaits her after the fight. The children have all committed suicide. Pascal is heartbroken and begs A2 to either wipe his memory or simply kill him.

9S finally wakes up in the care of Devola and Popola at the Resistance camp. He heads towards the massive structure that appeared in the City Ruins. Accessing the system, he's greeted by a voice introducing a tour to the Resource Recovery Unit.

While going from the tower to the new known structure, he decisively makes up his mind to destroy machine lifeforms and kill A2. He arrives at the bottom of the Resource Recovery Unit at last. He boards the defended unit and sets off for the upper levels to get the first Access Release Key.

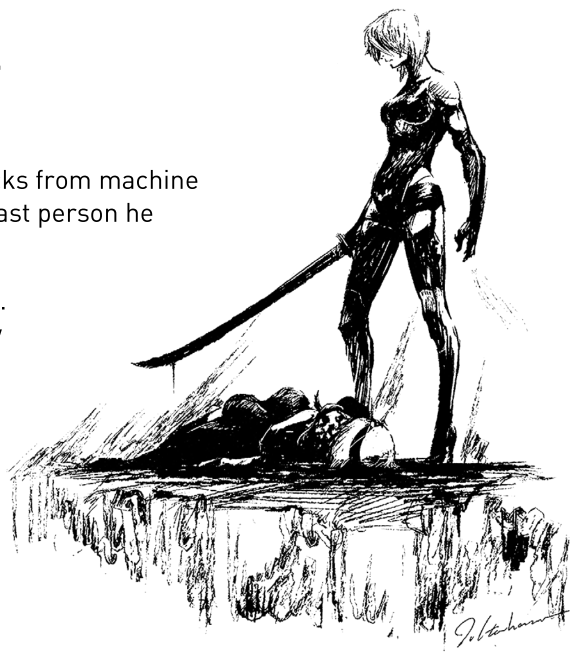
9S' next target is another unit, hovering over the Flooded City. His Pod warns him of irregularities in his vitals, but he continues hurrying without paying it any heed. While inside the unit, 9S isn't able to confirm any enemies. Though deft hacking, he obtains the second Tower Access Release Key, but his body is left unable to fight. NFCS is malfunctioning and he cannot operate at full capacity. He aims for the Resistance camp, in order to have it repaired by Devola. The two twins, Devola and Popola, are worried about him—but their words don't reach him.

August 6: After being repaired, 9S heads towards the last Resource Recovery Unit. This leads him to the amusement park.

Meanwhile, A2 leaves the abandoned factory and goes outside, where the sky rings with the Tower guidance system's voice. She heads towards the same Unit as 9S.

Inside the Recovery Unit, 9S is barraged by long-distance attacks from machine lifeforms. Destroying them, he presses on until he meets the last person he expected to see: his own Operator, 21O.

9S fights the corrupted Operator who ends up wounded by him. She is finished off by A2. 9S turns his fury onto her when a new foe appears, crashing their reunion. A2 is left alone to fight the enemy.



9S is wakened by his pod. He has all authentication keys, and heads for the Tower entrance. He unlocks it to find a huge number of enemies; Devola and Popola appear just in time to help him. Thanks to the twins' backup, 9S finally enters the Tower, which has some entertainment prepared.

The worst thing 9S could encounter: A group of 2B-type androids.



A2 also heads toward the Tower entrance where she finds Devola and Popola, leaning on the Tower's wall. Popola is alarmingly motionless. After thanking the Twins for their help, A2 sneaks into the Tower. While searching its interior, she steps into a gigantic, white library. After investigating some of the bookshelves, a multi-leg weapon comes through the roof and starts attacking her. The machine ends up fleeing away. She boards the elevator to the top of the Tower when she's forcibly hacked. In cyberspace, girls in red clothes challenge her.

9S is able to get rid of the 2B-type androids, but at the cost of losing his left arm. He grafts one from the 2B copy. The arm is infected, and he must hack himself to remove the virus. As he fights, another group of girls in red clothes appear. They challenge him to kill some machines. He succeeds and then proceeds to snatch a flight unit from the infected YoRHa. He heads to the top of the Tower, followed by A2 fighting the same multi-leg weapon in the ascending elevator.

It is then revealed that the Tower is a giant canon aiming for the Human server on the moon. Its goal is to destroy all evidence that humanity ever went instinct, perpetuating the lie that the androids are fighting to help humans reconquer Earth.

9S and A2 reach the top of the Tower. Two large multi-leg weapons form into one and stand against them.

The machine defeated, 9S and A2 turn on each other. A2 explains that killing each other would be pointless, but 9S is deafened by hate and his corrected mind is no longer capable of logical thinking.
Thus, begins the final battle between the last YoRHa units.

After a well-fought battle, A2 is about to slash a final blow.
Right at this instant, she hears 2B's voice in the back of her mind, and lowers her guard. Runs though, she stabs unwillingly 9S with her sword as she falls. They both die.

Hear 9S last words in the short story 9S' Memories on page 551.

Black box responses cease from all YoRHa units. The Pods move the YoRHa Project into its final phase; delete all personal data (the personality) of the YoRHa androids. However, they are conflicted because they come to the realization that they actually care deeply about 2B, A2, and 9S. Refusing to delete the data causes the two Pods to be considered irregular by the Pod Network. They fight against their low-level programs. They succeed but Pod 042 finds himself unable to move—Pod 153 helps carry him.

Pod 153 and 042 are now trying to recreate the three androids from pieces near the, now collapse, Tower. Once they're done with the body, they will try to reinstall the androids' personal data they salvaged earlier; hopefully bringing them back to life.

Learn about what's next in the recital NieR Music Concert: Farewell on page 557.



NieR:Automata's Archives

[ARCHIVED FILE] – 11B'S ESCAPE PLAN

ELAPSED TIME: 00:02:13

Re-activation complete. A check of my body reveals various failures. Communication functions have been destroyed. I cannot contact my team or the bunker.
I leave a draft of this message here as a log.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:10:13

I verify the plan once more. Using my supposed destruction in this sortie as a guise, I sever all communication. I then pass beneath the abandoned factory and escape. Further analysis reveals that I took
anti-air fire while in the flight unit, resulting in damage to my body. No matter--it can be repaired.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:15:21

I'm cold. My sensory systems seem to be failing.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:33:12

Noise has started to cloud my vision. Virus warnings appear frequently. It is unclear whether I am infected or if the system is in error.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:33:21

Repairs are proceeding poorly, perhaps because I am flustered. Pursuers will come if I don't move soon. Was I wrong to attempt escape?

ELAPSED TIME: 00:33:31

I'm scared. I want to go back to the bunker, but I can't restore communications.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:38:00

This can't continue. I can't stay here. I have to run... YoRHa squadron was wrong... I have to find somewhere safer... I'm scared. I'm so scared.

ELAPSED TIME: 00:45:00

Painful. It hurts. Help. Why stOp. WHo aM I? WRong wrong wro ng. I neEd to Run...

> End of Log File_

Jackass's Bomb Recipe

Required materials:

- Three AIM-11s (from flight units)
- The corpse of a suitable android
- Five cores from machine lifeforms capable of EMP attacks
- An adequate amount of bonding agent
- A container (I usually use a machine's head, but you be you)

Assembly instructions :

- Disassemble each AIM-11 and connect the image unit to the helix.
- Yank out the connector cable from dead android's spine and strip it using a file or whatever.
- Connect the cable and image unit.
- Decode the machine lifeform cores and embed the image units inside 'em, then mix in the bonding agent and reshape. Don't forget to insert the cores it'll need to build explosive power.
- Once you're done with that, add some nails or whatever random shrapnel junk you have lying around.

Bulletin Record

"Resident Life" - May Issue

The rainy season is upon us.

Once monsoon season strikes, it will be difficult to hang your bedding—so take this chance to air them out before June. Doing so will also help prevent mold and mites.

* There has been a recent increase in the number of people ignoring garbage disposal rules. We all share these facilities, so please be sure to put out compost on Mondays, and all other trash on Thursdays.

■ LIBRARY INDEX

015 PORT 042148 ADAM UNIT STORAGE RECORD

016 PORT 009397 EVE UNIT STORAGE RECORD

017 PORT 027581 YORHA COMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION RECORD

018 PORT 053031 YORHA SERVER RECORD

019 PORT 056776 HUMAN SERVER RECORD

— Outline

— — Predicted Human Server Infiltration Route (Release)

— — — SG Block

— — — GI Block

— — — SF Block

— — Genetic Storage Warehouse Location Information

— — — [Browsing Restricted]

— — — — — [Browsing Restricted]

— — — — — [Browsing Restricted]

020 PORT 028295 HUMAN SERVER ESTABLISHMENT RECORD

021 PORT 008471 HUMAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION RECORD

022 PORT 062423 TOWER SYSTEM SUMMARY

— Tower System Outline

The tower facility processes and computerizes resources sent by resource-recovery units for use in its launch device.

Made up of 256 stratums, it can filter and compress information with a turbidity of less than 2,300 and have it recorded into the payload in approximately 27 minutes and 32 seconds*. Details regarding routes required for the digestion of androids are recorded separately.

* The allowed diversity-learning error rate is 7.21%

— [Browsing Restricted]

023 PORT 064202 TOWER SUB-SYSTEM SUMMARY

024 PORT 058632 SPECIAL UNITS CREATION RECORD

025 PORT 016941 PLANT SPECIES PRESERVATION RECORD

026 PORT 004742 ANIMAL SPECIES PRESERVATION RECORD

LETTER TO THE FOREST KING

Here lies the Forest King, Ernst.

This exalted individual was the earliest among us to awaken to his own will, and for this reason, did we name him our regent.

Looking to sow the seed of this will in others, HIs Highness distributed his own precious parts. His retainers were the first to be so blessed, followed by his subjects. And in doing so, he brought forth a paradise—one made for machines alone. Through his gifts did we learn of the thing called ego, and eventually of our own selves. And just as ego gives way to emotion, so too did emotion lead us to feel great loyalty to our king.

But our king was too great—and too kind. Having distributed his parts, it became difficult for him to function, and he soon fell into a deep and silent sleep.

Now, the only path left to us—his loyal vassals—is to construct a kingdom of eternal peace, one which lives up to the magnanimous heart of our king. And so, as a sign both of our resolve and our gratitude, we leave in this place a chip made from our combined parts.

Your spirit lives on in us, O great king. And so, we implore you to rest in peace.

—The Forest Kingdom, Its Citizens, As One

ENGELS 110-B RECORD 0005

```
[Shipment Record] February 14

[Approved] February 14

Engels Fortress Destroyer Transformable Combination Infantry—4
units

> Production code: 110-A
> Production code: 110-B
> Production code: 110-C
> Production code: 110-D

Engels Goliath-class Suppression Flight Weapon

> Production code: 022-A

[Inspection] OK
```

ENGELS 110-B RECORD 0010

[Overview]
Engels Fortress Destroyer Transformable Combination Infantry
Production code: 110-B
Production date: February 14, 11944 CE

[Records]
First deployment: August 3, 11934 CE
Individuals killed: 11,345
Largest combo: 234
Total points: 9,432

[Condition]
(Repair required) Both arms malfunctioning
(Repair required) Legs damaged—ambulation impossible
(Repair required) Fragmentation errors verified in memory storage
(Repair required) Voice system malfunctioning

* Additional errors exist, but are not listed above.

ENGELS 110-B RECORD 0020

[Journal 000]
As I can no longer move, I have nothing to do.
Perhaps I will try writing what is called a “journal”.

[Journal 010]

Where did machine lifeforms come from?
We repeat a process of self-proliferation and repair.
Am I my own existence?
Or do we all encompass one sole existence?

[Journal 020]

The aliens—our creators—are beings that conquer worlds and stars.
Their behavior is exceedingly simple. They share one objective, and as such, there is never conflict between them. But what about machine lifeforms? What about us?

[Journal 030]

Rain is falling. A bird stopped on my shoulder.
I never tire of looking at life on this planet.
I will make my record of this bird protected data so I do not lose it.

[ARCHIVED FILE] – SHIPPING RECORDS

```
September 24 – Shipped
September 25 – Delivery (Scheduled)

UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 PURIFIED WATER
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 REPAIR MATERIALS
UNIT 010 EMPTY
UNIT 010 EMPTY

Over.
```

[ARCHIVED FILE] – YoRHa BODY STORAGE RECORDS

```
 1S [0010] [0040] [n] [----]
 2B [1203] [0040] [y] [----]
 8H [8900] [0040] [y] [----]
24S [0210] [0040] [y] [----]
 9S [0020] [0040] [n] [----]
12D  LOST  [----] [-] [----] [----]
11B  LOST  [----] [-] [----] [----]
12H  LOST  [----] [-] [----] [----]
11B  LOST  [----] [-] [----] [----]
12H  LOST  [----] [-] [----] [----]
```

[ARCHIVED FILE] – COUNCIL / YoRHa RECORDS

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* Note that these documents are classified Level-S Confidential, and are not to be disclosed to any persons affiliated with YoRHa aside from the Commander.

Index:

– Project YoRHa Outline

– – YoRHa Forces

– – YoRHa Unit Combat System

– – Bunker Administration

– – – Chain of Command

– – – Council of Humanity Development Department

– – – Backdoor

– – Support Units

– – Black box

– – Resistance Communications Network

* Permission is to be received from the designated parties responsible for each entry prior to viewing.

[TOP SECRET] – BLACK BOX

The following document details the final stages of Project YoRHa.

----
* Note that these documents are classified Level-SS Confidential, and should not be disclosed to any YoRHa personnel, including the Bunker commander.

[Black box]

Each YoRHa unit is equipped with a "black box", an item created by reusing the core of a machine lifeform. As such, it could be said that the consciousnesses of YoRHa units and machine lifeforms share the same structure. Said black boxes were installed after determining that it would be inhumane to install standard AI in androids that are ultimately destined for disposal.

(For the record, malfunctioning black boxes have caused some YoRHa units to turn hostile.)

[TOP SECRET] – PROJECT YoRHa

Project YoRHa is a comprehensive information project intended to enhance android morale. This entry details the circumstances that led to its proposal, as well as information related to operations conducted during its individual phases.

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* Note that these documents are classified Level-S Confidential, and are not to be disclosed to any persons affiliated with YoRHa aside from the Commander.

[Human Extinction]

Following the collapse of Project Gestalt around 3400 CE, the remaining androids searched for a way to revive humanity. But they were unable to discover an answer, and humans went extinct by roughly 4200 CE. Afterward, the genes of Gestalts and structural information of the remaining Replicants were recorded and sent to a storage facility on the moon.

[Loss of Android Morale]

The news of humanity's extinction was meant to be a closely guarded secret, but rumors of the event eventually began to leak out. Having lost the one thing which they were programmed to protect, android morale began a precipitous decline. Concerned by this turn of events, Command designed Project YoRHa as a means to lift android spirits.

[Project 01-03: Lunar Server]

The first stage of the project was spreading the word among Resistance groups that humanity was not, in fact, extinct—and the last remaining remnants had managed to escape to the moon. This deception was supported by installing a communications server on the lunar surface to send regular transmissions. Said server was designed to be manned by as few maintenance personnel as possible.

[Project 02-01 Establishment of the YoRHa squadron]

Through the dramatic alteration of the Next Generation Combat Unit Project that had been proposed at the time, new "YoRHa" models began to be manufactured. Officials models were created following the implementation of data acquired from an experimental squadron, and were then deployed to all regions. Certain members of the YoRHa operations staff, however, were informed of the full scope of the project—these units were tasked to operate and protect the server on the moon.

[TOP SECRET] – MODEL No.2

[Project 08-01:
Operation of Model No.2 in the YoRHa Project]

After the first descent of the YoRHa prototypes, Attacker 2 (A2) was the sole unit to return alive, despite mediocre results during her simulations. Upon analysis of her stored personality data, it was discovered she possesses excellent analytical and decision-making skills in extreme circumstances.

As reported separately, we will install this personality data in the new lot of E models and use them for the security protection of this project.

[TOP SECRET] – YoRHa DISPOSAL

The following document details the final stages of Project YoRHa.

----
* Note that these documents are classified Level-SS Confidential, and should not be disclosed to any YoRHa personnel, including the Bunker commander.

[Project 03-01: Disposal of YoRHa]

The backdoor of the Bunker has been set to open once the time approaches to switch to new models when enough combat data has been collected. The Bunker will be disposed of by having it be deliberately attacked by machines. At this time, all materials regarding the YoRHa project, including this document, will be lost, and falsification of the information that mankind still resides on the moon will be complete.

INFANT MACHINE'S MEMORIES

It's so dark… Mommy… I've been born!
Mommy… Where are you?
What…should I do?
Tell me what to do, Mommy. Please…
I'll try my best… Please don't leave me alone…
I'm so lonely, Mommy…
Mommy… Mommy… Mommy… Mommy… Mommy…

RECORD OF A BESTIAL MACHINE

LONG LONG AGO. A RECORD LEFT IN A BROKEN MEMORY CIRCUIT. THE LEADER OF AN ANIMAL PACK PICKED ME UP WHEN I WAS BROKEN AND COULD NOT MOVE AND SAVED ME. HE WAS A GREAT LEADER. HE LIVED FOR THE PACK. WHEN HE DIED I WANTED TO DO THE SAME. TO LIVE FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE AND DIE FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE. BUT I AM A MACHINE SO EVERYONE WOULD LEAVE ME BEHIND.

BUT THE PACK LIVES ON AND BRINGS NEW LIFE SO IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT THAT. IT WAS THE PROMISE I MADE TO MY DEAD LEADER. WITH THESE MEMORIES OF PEACE I MUST CONTINUE TO PROTECT MY FAMILY. BUT ONE DAY IN THE WAR BETWEEN THE ANDROIDS AND MACHINES THE FOREST WAS RAZED. WE CANNOT GO ON LIVING WITHOUT A HOME. THE FAMILY FALLS APART. THAT IS WHY I SEARCH. FOR A NEW PLACE TO LIVE. A FOREST WHERE WE CAN ALL LIVE AND WHERE NO ONE WILL BOTHER US. I AM HERE SO IT WILL BE OKAY. I SWEAR TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY.

A PIOUS ROBOTS WILL

I feel so blessed to have been able to join this organization.

For I—unlike other machine lifeforms—have found meaning in death.

At first, all I did was study the religion of humans.

But then I came to know the existence called “god”.

To be honest, I still do not know what “god” truly is. But there is something else I learned since coming here—a life that seems devoid of purpose when faced alone can be perceived as meaningful when you're with someone else. In a world consumed by conflict and hatred, gaining such peace of mind was a happy thing indeed.

For us, death is not the end. It is the beginning.

There is nothing so happy as becoming “god” with everyone else.

The Religious Order of Divinity Through Death,

Director, Public Relations

Schwanstein Castle - Short Guide

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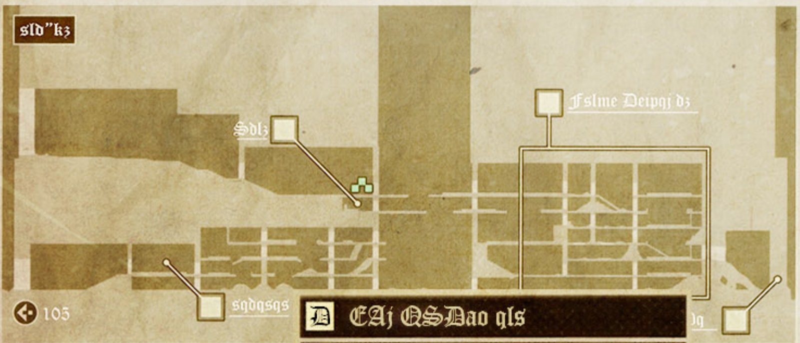
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A stunningly beautiful piece of architecture, Schwanstein Castle was constructed almost 550 years ago by the reigning lord of the fief. Now designated a World Heritage Site, it hosts countless tourists from all across the globe every year.

Though it was initially used as a fortress during the lord's conflict against the "church", Schwanstein Castle because a dwelling for the royal family and other nobles after the flames of war faded. The literature-loving third lord of the castle, Leonard III, constructed a library that boasted the largest collection of books in the nation. This room remains one of the castle's most beloved features to this very day.



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Factory Cafetario Sign

AUGUST MENU

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Croquettes	French Fry Surprise	Meatless Meat and Potato Stew	Buttered Potatoes	Potato Curry	Potato Salad	Potato Gratin

NOTE: All meals must be consumed in full. Employees who do not consume their meals will have their work load increased by 30 percent.

Abandoned Factory Memo

June 4

I haven't been home in days.

They cut my pay again. I can't keep this up.

June 12

It was decided at the morning meeting that they're stepping up our production quota. No wonder explosions keep happening! You can't just churn out important weapons all willy-nilly.

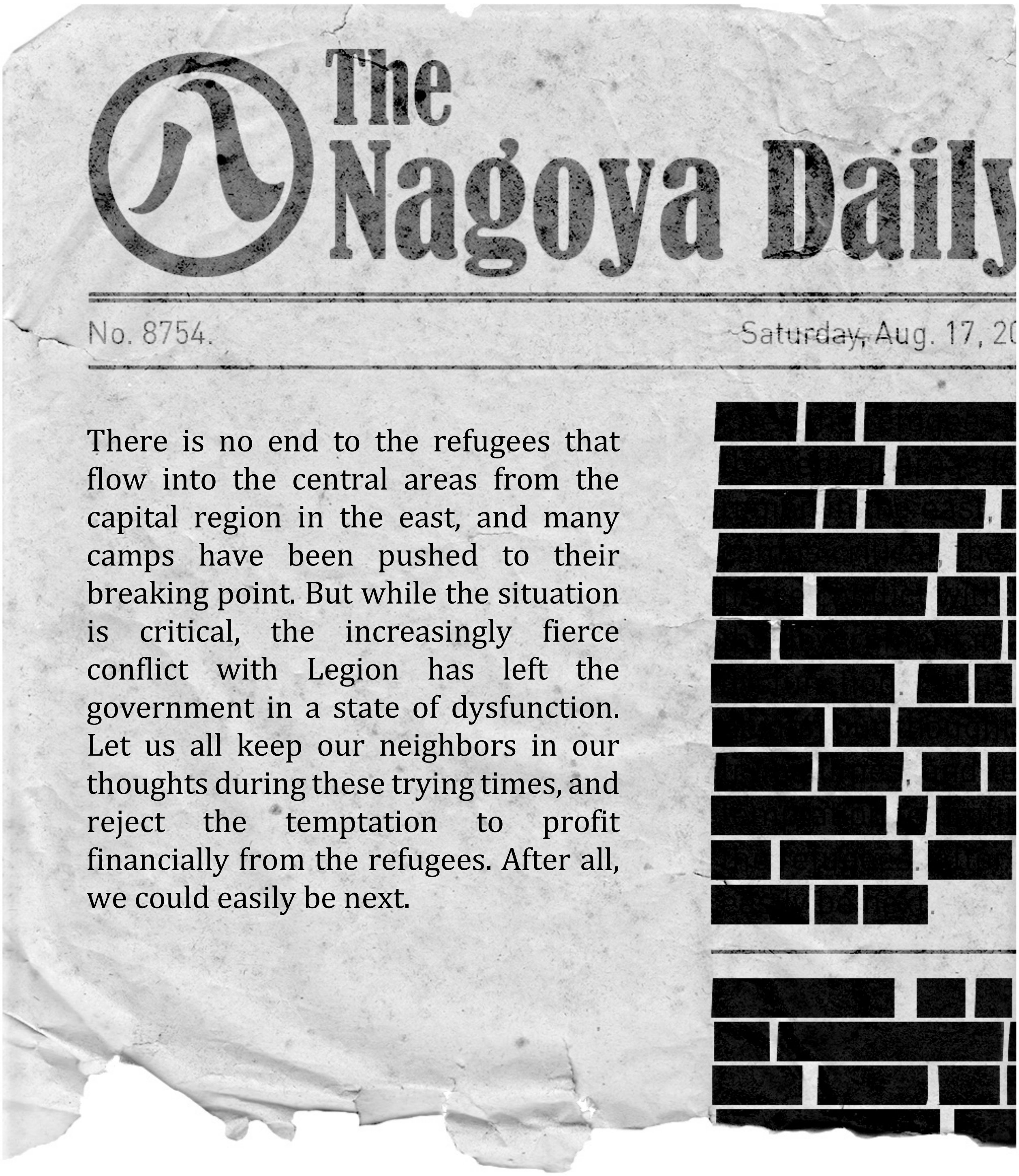
September 22

There was another rampage in the underground test site—sounds like a P-22 model this time.

One of my friends died.

When is this war with the Legion going to end?

■ Newspaper Scrap

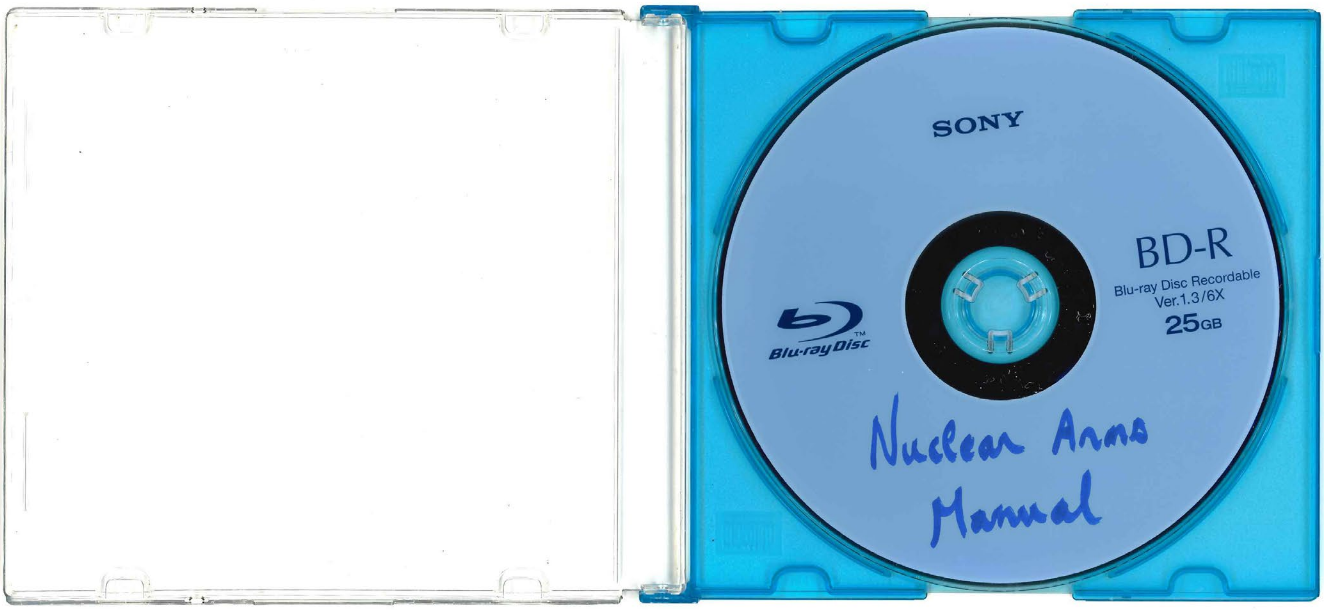


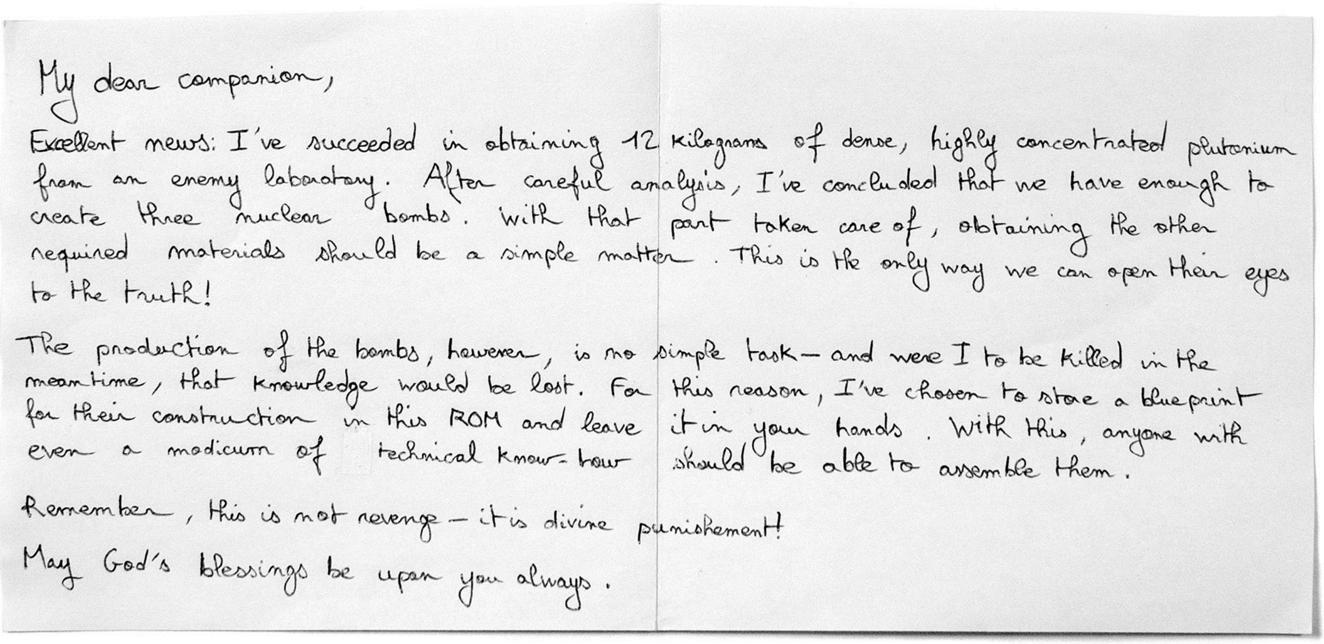
The Nagoya Daily

No. 8754. Saturday, Aug. 17, 2

There is no end to the refugees that flow into the central areas from the capital region in the east, and many camps have been pushed to their breaking point. But while the situation is critical, the increasingly fierce conflict with Legion has left the government in a state of dysfunction. Let us all keep our neighbors in our thoughts during these trying times, and reject the temptation to profit financially from the refugees. After all, we could easily be next.

■ Nuclear Arms Manual





My dear companion,

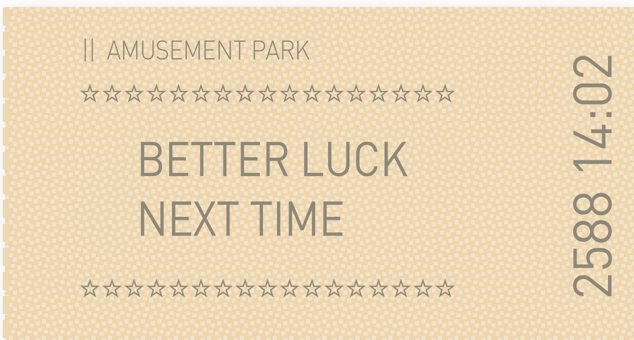
Excellent news: I've succeeded in obtaining 12 kilograms of dense, highly concentrated plutonium from an enemy laboratory. After careful analysis, I've concluded that we have enough to create three nuclear bombs. With that part taken care of, obtaining the other required materials should be a simple matter. This is the only way we can open their eyes to the truth!

The production of the bombs, however, is no simple task — and were I to be killed in the meantime, that knowledge would be lost. For this reason, I've chosen to store a blueprint for their construction in this ROM and leave it in your hands. With this, anyone with even a modicum of technical know-how should be able to assemble them.

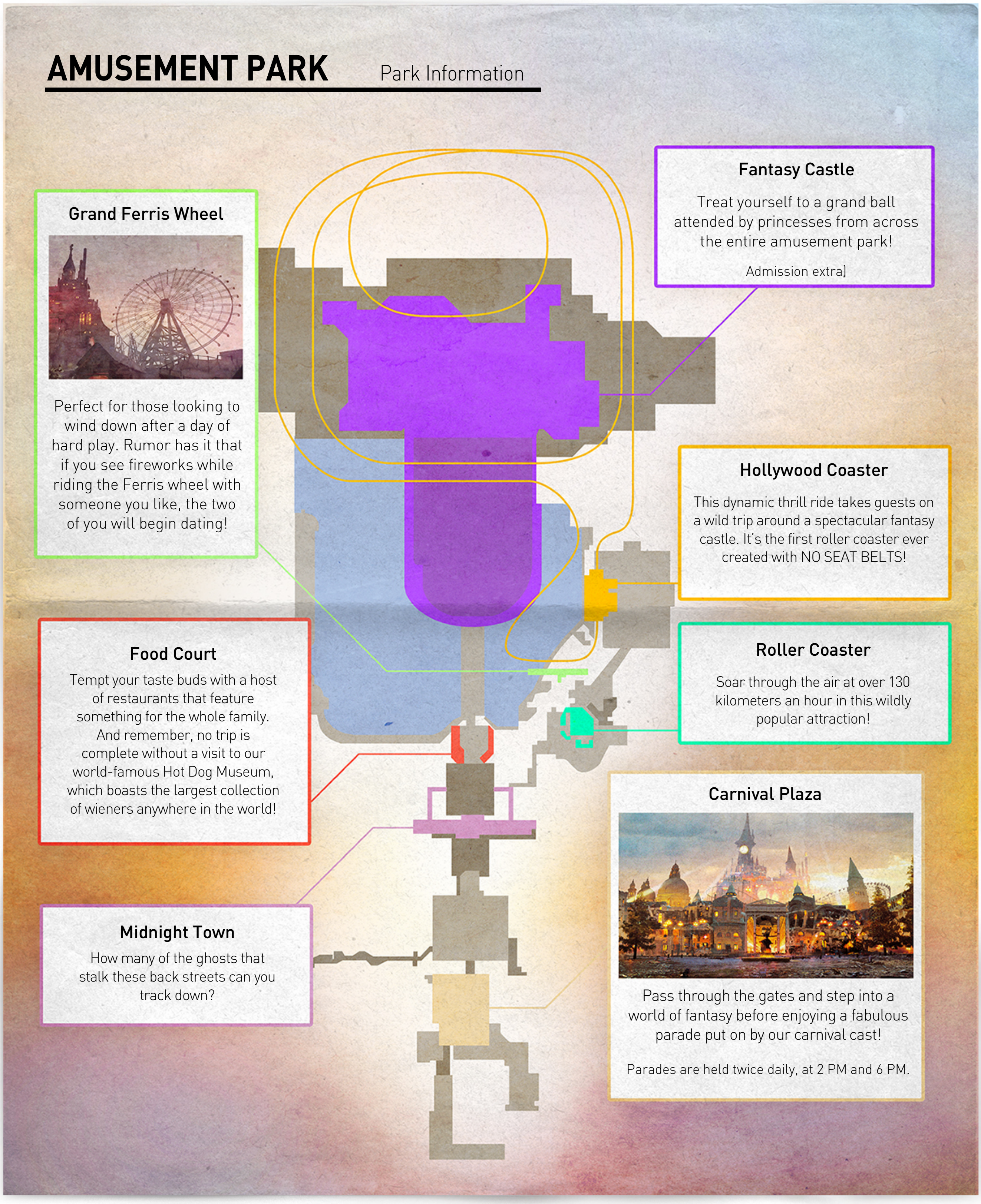
Remember, this is not revenge — it is divine punishement!

May God's blessings be upon you always.

■ Filthy Lottery Ticket



Tattered Pamphlet



AMUSEMENT PARK

Park Information

Grand Ferris Wheel

Perfect for those looking to wind down after a day of hard play. Rumor has it that if you see fireworks while riding the Ferris wheel with someone you like, the two of you will begin dating!

Fantasy Castle

Treat yourself to a grand ball attended by princesses from across the entire amusement park!

Admission extra)

Hollywood Coaster

This dynamic thrill ride takes guests on a wild trip around a spectacular fantasy castle. It's the first roller coaster ever created with NO SEAT BELTS!

Food Court

Tempt your taste buds with a host of restaurants that feature something for the whole family. And remember, no trip is complete without a visit to our world-famous Hot Dog Museum, which boasts the largest collection of wieners anywhere in the world!

Roller Coaster

Soar through the air at over 130 kilometers an hour in this wildly popular attraction!

Carnival Plaza

Pass through the gates and step into a world of fantasy before enjoying a fabulous parade put on by our carnival cast!

Parades are held twice daily, at 2 PM and 6 PM.

Midnight Town

How many of the ghosts that stalk these back streets can you track down?

Mysterious Lithographs

Rule 106
[Thou Shalt Not Live on Level Ground]

This rule has its origins in a tragic past. We Masked People originally inhabited the plains along the coast, but one day our village was destroyed by a great wall of water. This rule is a valuable teaching that represents what our ancestors learned from that disaster.

Rule 432
[The Jar-bound Lizard Must Be Captured]

Long ago, an aged man threw out his back after gazing upon a lizard in a jar. His young wife departed to call the doctor, only to vanish and never return. The surrounding villagers spread rumors of how she had fled, but the man paid them no heed, instead fiercely insisting that the lizard must be captured.

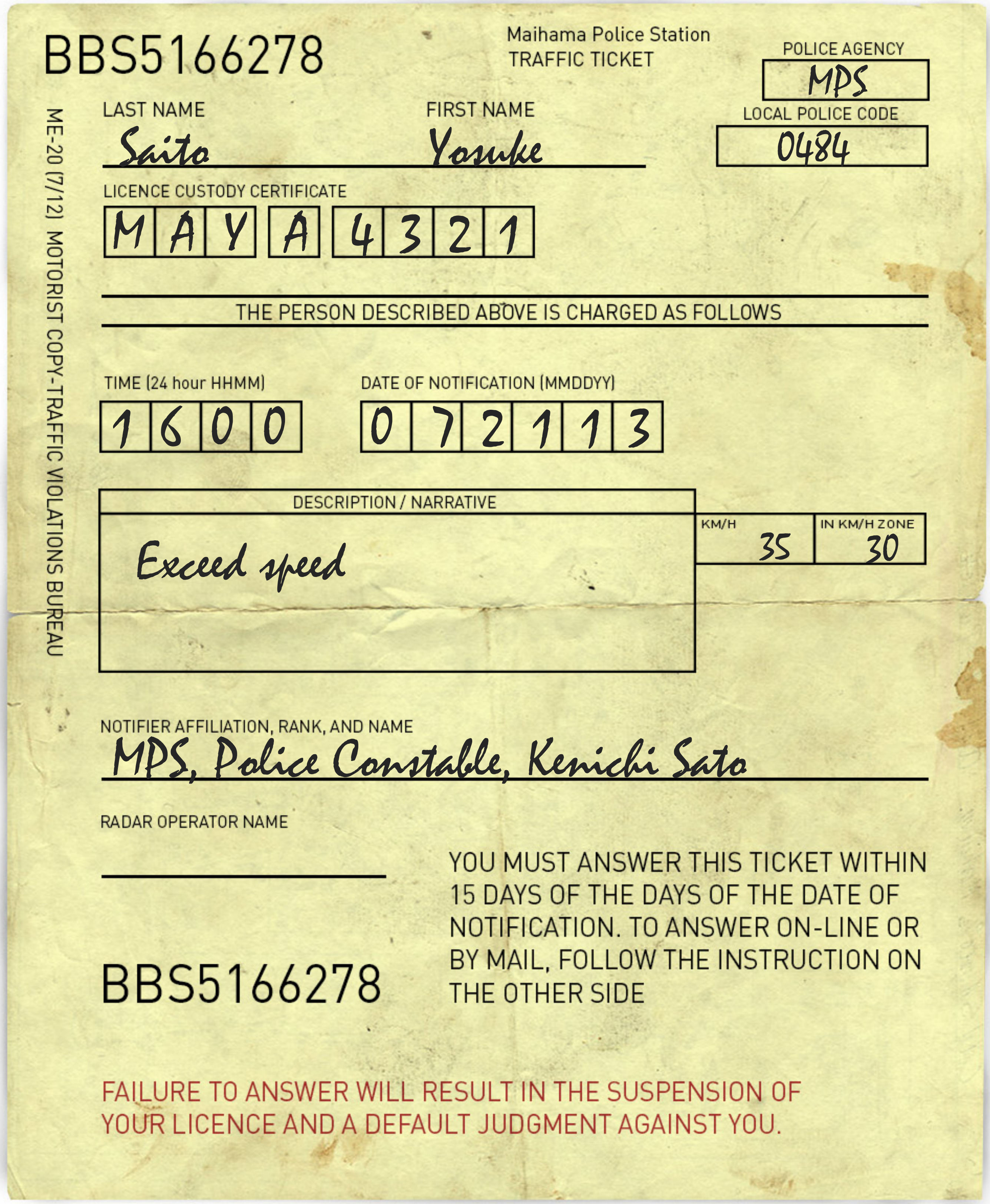
Rule 8,614
[Parents Shall Not Purchase Birthday Feast Ingredients]

We Masked People have traditionally shown proclivities toward treasuring our children. However, due to parents purchasing far too many ingredients for the birthday parties of their children, much of what is bought go to waste. This rule was passed by the king, who was quite distressed by the ceaselessness of such behavior.

Rule 11,034
[The Height of One's Status and Lodging Shall Match]

In this world, order is protected through a focus on "rules". Those of high status—as well as the aged—are deserving of respect, and therefore must dwell in residences above all others. This is to be considered a natural courtesy.

■ Paper Attached to Vehicle



BBS5166278

Maihama Police Station
TRAFFIC TICKET

POLICE AGENCY: MPS
LOCAL POLICE CODE: 0484

LAST NAME: Saito
FIRST NAME: Yosuke

LICENCE CUSTODY CERTIFICATE: M A Y A 4 3 2 1

THE PERSON DESCRIBED ABOVE IS CHARGED AS FOLLOWS

TIME (24 hour HHMM): 1 6 0 0
DATE OF NOTIFICATION (MMDDYY): 0 7 2 1 1 3

DESCRIPTION / NARRATIVE: Exceed speed

KM/H: 35
IN KM/H ZONE: 30

NOTIFIER AFFILIATION, RANK, AND NAME: MPS, Police Constable, Kenichi Sato

RADAR OPERATOR NAME: ______________

BBS5166278

YOU MUST ANSWER THIS TICKET WITHIN 15 DAYS OF THE DAYS OF THE DATE OF NOTIFICATION. TO ANSWER ON-LINE OR BY MAIL, FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTION ON THE OTHER SIDE

FAILURE TO ANSWER WILL RESULT IN THE SUSPENSION OF YOUR LICENCE AND A DEFAULT JUDGMENT AGAINST YOU.

ME-20 (7/12) MOTORIST COPY-TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS BUREAU

■ Ragged DVD


The first-ever DVD of the beautiful Kikyou, created just before her popularity skyrocketed. With a variety of costumes— including blazers, blouses, school swimsuits, and a special hot-teacher look— this DVD is packed with content no true fan can afford to miss. It's the must-have disc of the summer!
Starring: Kikyou
(feat. Cheki)!
"School Life 101"
DVD x 1
Website :
E-mail :
¥ 3,800
KEY 1 ★
BEFORE TAX



■ **Strange Doll**

A strange doll that was nailed to a tree. Ragged and worn, it's unclear what this item was used for.

[ARCHIVED FILE] – PATIENT HEALTH RECORD

Class 1 Patient: "Yonah"
Chest X-ray: No abnormalities.
Heart echo: No abnormalities.
C1 Continuing chronic renal failure
C2 Convulsive seizures in the diaphragm
C3 No vomiting <- 4mg luciferase

The patient's condition makes further treatment impossible. A report will be submitted to the Management Committee detailing courses of action in the event of the patient's death, focusing primarily on how that information is to be manipulated with respect to the Original.

As back-up in the event of a sudden worsening in the patient's condition, she is to be assigned five additional doctors. [Identification required]

■ Department Store Flyer

[Tokyo Department Store Going-Out-of-Business Sale]

After 25 glorious years of serving our loyal customers, it is with a heavy heart that we announce our last day of business will be on March 31.

Beginning on March 1, we'll be slashing prices on everything in the entire store. Additionally, we'll be opening our doors one hour earlier throughout the entire month.

We eagerly await your visit, and thank you again for your years of patronage.

* Bring this flyer with you to receive a free pack of tissues.

■ Weapon Shop Flyer

Thanks for stopping by!

Accord's is a thriving chain of weapon stores with over 140 locations across the world. We feature a fantastic selection of goods, including swords that match the regional features and squads of each country!

In addition to newly developed equipment, we are technologically unrivaled when it comes to taking ancient blades and making them ready for use again. We proudly invite you to explore the wide variety of weaponry born of the skillful handiwork and extraordinary passion of our founder, Accord.

We appreciate your continued support, and look forward to serving you in the future.

10th July, 11945 – A2's boot log

※ This is a record of A2's booting up after her fight against Hegel.
She just met with Pod 042, two weeks after killing 2B.

She had this dream many times. She fought with her comrades, heard their scream...and she cried. She had it so often that she is aware it is a dream while experiencing it.

> "Good morning, A2."

But she wasn't expected to be called when she woke up. That was the only thing that was unusual.

> "What the...?"

> "Analysis: YoRHa Type A2 was restarted 5 minutes and 42 seconds ago.
> The cause was excessive strain due to battle against a large machine lifeform."

The monotone voice from the floating box. Now she remembered. She engaged a large hostile in the desert, was exposed to an EMP attack, and she lost consciousness right as the battle ended. She brushed sand off her and stood up.

> "All this goddamn sand is starting to piss me off!"

> "Alert: Fuel filter performance deteriorating. Fine particulate matter seems to have entered the filter while fighting in the desert. Proposal: Replace the faulty part immediately."

> "You make it sound so easy."

The box was always saying absurd things. She couldn't see how it was to be a "support assistant."

> "Records indicate said part was once used at the Resistance camp."

She stared at the box in surprise. She didn't mishear. It definitely just said what she thought it said.

> "The Resistance camp..."

She knew that Anemone was alive. She had recently been told that information. Until then, she thought she was the only survivor. That day, after frantically escaping Mount Ka'ala, she removed the bomb in her. She threw away anything that seemed like it could contain location-sensing hardware and left behind almost all her equipment issued by Command. She wandered the Earth with just her long sword in hand. Destroy as many machines as possible. That was the only thing on her mind.

She died during that battle. Her old self was buried under the rubble with her comrades. That's why even if she knew Anemone was alive, she didn't go out of her way to contact her. She didn't know what to do if she met her. But now she had a perfect excuse, in the form of a fuel filter, to go talk to her. She peered toward the direction the box specified. She could see some high-rise structures beyond the sandstorms.

> "Guess I'll go."

She walked, kicking sand as she went. She called out her comrades' names in her head. But she felt nothing. She was empty inside.

Memories of a Songstress

※ The record of the singing machine lifeform that haunts the innermost depths of the amusement park. Her desire to be loved gave rise to a sense of beauty most unsightly

Look at me.

Oh please look at me.

I want your eyes to look upon me alone.

Have I not become beautiful?

Do these clothes make me look cute?
Would he like it if I walked like this?

I still don't understand what it means to love someone. But I've made up my mind.
I will do whatever it takes to capture his affection.

Long ago, an old machine lifeform told me something: "Beauty is what wins love."

But what is "beauty"?
After researching the old world, I finally learned the truth.
Beauty is pretty skin.
Beauty is stylish accessories.
Beauty is looking one's best.

I will become beautiful. I will do it for him.

I once heard tell of a precious jewel far to the east.
It was said to be located on a terribly dangerous mountain.
But I did not care.

I slipped on cliffs. I feel onto rocks. But eventually I claimed the jewel.
Blue stone. Brilliant blue. So beautiful.

I lost many parts obtaining this jewel. I lost...myself.

But my wounds are badges.

There's a rumor floating among the other machine lifeforms lately:

"Devour the body of an android to gain eternal beauty."

Such nonsense. It is physically impossible to obtain beauty by consuming an android.

But I tried anyway.
I would try anything.
I wanted to vomit, but I kept going.
It tasted like oil.

Not a moment passed where I didn't strive to become more beautiful. But he still won't look my way.

I even tried to learn what is called a "song."
Songs can make someone have feelings for you.
That's what they say.
So I practiced every day.
But he still won't look my way.

I ate more androids. I even ate machine lifeforms. But he still won't look my way.

He won't look my way.
He won't look my way.
He won't look my way.
He won't look my way.
He won't look my way.

Won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way won't look my way

He still won't look my way.

That's when I realized he cares not for jewels.
Or songs or beauty or appearance or anything else.
I cannot win his love.

Why have I done this to myself?

Meaningless.
Meaningless.

MEANINGLESS.

I gaze into the mirror. In its reflection, I see only my own meaningless. And so I scream.

someone please look my way

YOKO FACT 24 - From the Strategy Guide Q&A with Yoko Taro (translated by /u/Merutan)

https://theark.wiki/w/Strategy_Guide/Q%26A_with_Yoko_Taro

Beauvoir, the songstress boss, is named after the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. Her original machine name, Simone, is also the name of an opera singer (Simone Osbourne). The machine that initially made her obsessed with becoming beautiful and graceful was, incidentally, Jean-Paul, the same machine which has a female following encountered throughout the game. Jean-Paul is himself a reference to Jean-Paul Sartre; in real life, de Beauvoir and Sartre had a long-time romantic relationship, though they never got married.

Does the machine network have a concept of 'ego'? And if so, how did its ego manifest?

Since the definition of 'ego' is a complicated matter, I can't answer this question.

Why did the machine lifeforms have top secret information regarding project YoRHa?

Because the machine lifeforms accessed the bunker and council of humanity through the backdoor. Furthermore, leaking this kind of information to the machine lifeforms has always been part of project YoRHa's plan.

How do the transportation devices scattered around the area work?

Each of them contains a great amount of materials (but not yet in humanoid form) that are used to reconstruct a unit's body.

Why did the machine lifeforms start devouring the androids?

To make the androids part of themselves and further their own evolution. Machine lifeforms may look rather plain, but as can be seen from how they created Adam and Eve, they are in reality very complicated beings.

NieR Music Concert: Beasts of Slaughter

Translation by /u/ilfans

Scene 1: Pearl Harbor Descent

A2 (narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
I am perpetually trapped ...... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.
Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment?
I often think about the god who blessed me with this cryptic puzzle ...
... and wonder if I'll ever have the chance to kill him.

2B (narration): She is A2. Attacker No.2. A test model for YoRHa.

A2: The first time I was deployed to the front lines was in the year 11941, on December 8th. During the 14th Machine War, in the Pearl Harbor Descent Mission.

Decisive weapons created for the sole purpose of recapturing Earth from the machines. That was us ... That was "YoRHa".

2B (narration): The target of destruction was a server created by the machine lifeforms on the island of Oahu. The server was the backbone of the network encompassing the entire Pacific Ocean. And the plan, if it succeeded, would greatly influence the battle.

A2: However, due to an unexpected attack from the machines, our team suffered great losses. We joined with the area's Resistance members, but one ... by one ...

By the time I'd reached the server room, most of my companions had been killed.

2B (narration): And within that server room, A2 came to know the truth behind their mission. Every one of their battles ... had been predetermined by the Commander.
Their true purpose was the collection of experimental data in order to create a more finished product. Within the experimental bodies of A2 and her comrades ... bombs had been placed.

A2: (In despair) Our bodies ... contain bombs ...

That'll explode ... when we stop showing signs of life ...?

N-No ... This can't ...!

2B (narration): Every battle had been planned.
Every death had been planned.
And as A2 fell into despair, her friend called out to her.
"Number 2 ... I'll destroy this place, so ..."
"Please ... live on."

(A2 screams out desperately while crying.)

A2: No! Number 4!

2B (narration): It was the final attack ... a suicide attack.
The server room was then enveloped in a bright flash.

A2: Number 4!!

(A2 hides her face.)

2B (narration): ... The enemy server was destroyed. All enemies within a 250km radius went completely silent. Their influence over the entire Pacific Ocean had been rewritten. And ...

	(A2 slowly raises her head.)
A2:	I ... survived. I lost the goal I'd been fighting for, as well as betrayed the Commander I was supposed to believe in. And yet ... my life still remained. My comrades who lost their lives ... The YoRHa members who'd been shot down ... The Resistance members ... Everyone ... Number 21, Number 16 ... Number 4 ... I ... I'll ...!
2B (narration):	The black box belonging to the YoRHa member known as Number 2 was still online. She was acknowledged as the holder of information for the most important, confidential YoRHa plan. In order to prevent this information from leaking ... YoRHa test unit, Attacker No.2, was to be destroyed. That was all.

Scene 2: Executioner

9S (narration):	Attacker No.2. A2. She actually had an obedient, kind personality. She hated fighting more than anything else. She thought of her friends above anyone else. Her type of thinking didn't fit a soldier at all.
A2:	... However, during my first descent mission, I lost most of my comrades. The Commander had planned those battles all along. While praying to those who died ... I lost who I was.
9S (narration):	For a deserter like A2, there was nowhere she could return to. But she couldn't just throw away the life they'd given her.
A2:	I destroy more machine lifeforms each day. I don't believe a day will ever come where we reach a victory over them. But ... I can never forgive them for what they did to my comrades. So I'll continue to fight ... for myself.
9S (narration):	She fought, she broke, she repaired herself ... and then she repeated it. That pain ... and that pain alone ... was proof that she was alive. But, one day. She came face to face with an enemy she'd never imagined she would see.
	(2B speaks with a cold voice.)
2B:	YoRHa test model, Attacker No.2. A2 ... right?
	(A2 looks astonished.)
A2:	You're ...
9S (narration):	The opponent A2 had been met with was a new, state-of-the-art YoRHa model. And her face ... was exactly the same as A2's.
	(A2 speaks, overcome with surprise.)
A2:	The same face ... like me ... A No.2 model ... They can't be ... Are they mass producing new YoRHa units based on my battle data ...?

2B: A2, I have orders from the Council of Humanity for your termination based on the leakage of confidential information and the failure to manage said information.

A2: Orders ... for my termination?

2B: My name is ... 2E. No.2 Type E. I was dispatched from the Bunker to carry out your termination. Kindly cease function and hand over control of your body immediately. Otherwise, I'll be forced to destroy you.

A2: (A2 begins laughing, with anger in her voice.) Hah... Hahahahahaha ...

You were dispatched from the Bunker, were you? To terminate me? You said you were an Execution model? So they created a YoRHa unit with the same face as me, and then sent her to kill me ...
... just so they could cover up their sins? Hah ... Hahahahaha!

2B: A2. I don't have the time to listen to your ...

A2: Shut up!

(A2 suddenly becomes enraged.)

A2: If you people really are going to try to kill me ...
If you're truly going to hide the truth ...
Then so be it. I won't show any mercy either.
Machine lifeforms, the Bunker, the Commander, even the humans on the moon ...
I'll kill them all.

9S (narration): In her hand, she gripped a sword which was meant to kill machine lifeforms.
In her eyes, the light of her old self was gone.
Suffering from her loneliness, focused only on revenge ...
She gazed quietly at her new "enemy".

Scene 3: Pursuer

2B (narration): Fearing a leak of confidential YoRHa information, an order was issued to terminate A2. However, she was able to shake off pursuers, and survive countless battles with machines.

To her, everything had become an enemy, and she truly had nowhere she could run.

A2: Dammit! Sit still, would you!

9S: Hahah! Just throwing out random attacks like that isn't gonna work, you know.

A2: Then fight me head-on like a man!

9S: Well what do you expect? I'm a Scanner! Combat was never meant to be my forte!

A2: Geez, you talk way too much!

9S: And if you keep getting distracted like that, you're gonna show your weak point!

A2: Quit screwing around, dammit — auugh!

2B (narration): 9S managed to hack into A2. He broke through her logic barriers, and ended up in her personal data. All around her was nothing but white walls, closing her in.

A2: Th-This is ...?!

9S:	Hacking space. I've sealed your personal data inside your head. Okay then. Let's see here ... YoRHa test model A2. Attacker No.2 ... Due to the possibility of confidential information being leaked, the Council of Humanity has ordered your termination.
A2:	Heh. So you're one of the Commander's little dogs, huh.
9S:	Man, you don't pull any punches. But it doesn't matter how much you shout in here, you're not gonna run away from me.
2B (narration):	A black fog began to wind around A2. It was a trap designed to restrict her personal data.
9S:	That barrier's an installation type, but it faces inward. So no matter how much you thrash about, you're not getting out.
A2:	Dammit ...!
9S:	Don't you think you say that a little too much?
A2:	What the hell did the Commander tell you ...?
9S:	I just told you, didn't I? You deserted, so there's an order for your termination. But playing rough's not really my thing, so I'm thinking I'll send you back like this.
A2:	That's all, huh ...
9S:	Hm?
A2:	You couldn't get more information than just that? You Scanner models are always curious, after all.
	(9S's voice becomes cold.)
9S:	Are you ... taunting me? I prepared that barrier so I could detain you, but ... I think I've changed my mind. I'll be destroying your personal data here like I was ordered.
	(9S holds his hand out.)
9S:	I'm going to make you regret talking to me like that.
2B (narration):	9S issued a command for A2's erasure. However, the black fog surrounding A2 wouldn't react beyond a certain point. On the contrary, something began to happen to 9S's body instead. He suddenly realized multiple black snake-like bits of data wrapping themselves around him.
9S:	N-No way ... It can't be ...! A counterattack-type logic barrier?! H-How did you ...?!
	(A2 speaks, as she recovers from her damage.)
A2:	To put it simply ... I got it from you.
9S:	From ... me?!
2B (narration):	Those bits of data wrapped further around 9S, slowly eliminating any possible chances of escape.
A2:	YoRHa No.9 Type S ... This is the fourth time I've met that model. You were rather difficult to fight in the beginning.

	But ... after fighting you so many times, I became increasingly aware of a Scanner's habits. The others before you were the same ... They fought with various patterns, but ... You always end up trying to detain me with that damn hacking. It was a pretty close call the first time, but after the second time, I learned to block it with a barrier. This program was made just for you. A form of insurance.
	(9S speaks up as he suffers.)
9S:	No ... No! Dammit, I have to ... release the barrier ...
A2:	(A2 responds coldly.) It's no use. That barrier was made in order to collapse your own personal data. You're not getting out of that no matter what you do. That's how you made it to be, isn't it?
	(9S, still suffering, collapses.)
9S:	G-Guaaaah ...!! Damn ... Dammit!!! A2!!!!
	(Once his screams die out, A2 begins speaking quietly.)
A2:	This is the fourth time ... I've heard you scream like that. You should pray that we don't meet again.

Scene 4: Reunited

9S (narration):	We were wandering around a place known as the "Forest Kingdom". Looking for the leader of the area's weirdly aggressive machine lifeforms, the "Forest King". And we finally found it within a broken down castle. It was ... It was almost like a baby, in appearance. We were caught off guard. It couldn't even walk on its own, much less carry a weapon.
2B (narration):	This thing ... was the Forest King? And as if sensing our hesitation, she came ...
A2 (narration):	I was only there by chance. I had been disposing of machine lifeforms in the area, and their leader only happened to be there. The machine looked so small and weak. But I didn't hesitate to run it through with my sword. Its cries of death rang from its core to my sword. This is the enemy. This is the enemy. This is ... the enemy. I repeated that over and over to myself.
2B (narration):	The android that had just dropped down before us ... had the same face as me. YoRHa model No.2. Her eyes gazed in my direction. With a look of utter resignation.
9S:	2B! That's ... an android! A YoRHa-type android!
A2 (narration):	I knew exactly who they were. Because I'd already killed them countless times. And just like always, I knew the order would once again be given to terminate me.
2B (narration):	I had no memories of ever encountering her before. But for some reason ... I could feel a deep discomfort rise up from within me.
9S (narration):	Although she was a deserter, we were ordered to kill one of our own ... A YoRHa android. Doubts began to sprout in my heart. Was the YoRHa unit standing before us really our "enemy"?

A2 (narration):	No.9 Type S ... No.2 Type B. The YoRHa units I should've already killed so many times before. When I met them that time ... they were completely different from how they'd been in the past. I don't know why, but ... It seemed like they saw each other as old friends. ... It could've been some kind of premonition. That this was the end ... or maybe even the beginning of something. Number 21, Number 16 ... Number 4. If I die ... I'll be joining all of you. (A2 looks forward.)
A2 (narration):	So just ... wait for me, okay?
2B (narration):	We YoRHa are weapons created to fight.
9S (narration):	We YoRHa are a madness created to kill.
A2 (narration):	This world is full of curses. And we are all links in a chain of killing one another.
2B (narration):	Even so, we have to keep fighting.
9S (narration):	That's why, we have to keep killing.
A2 (narration):	Even if our fates are wrong,we can't stop.
All three (narration):	Because that is the meaning of our existence.



Emil's Recollection *Translation by /u/Merutan*

I made my way through the dimly lit factory, taking great care to hide the sound of my footsteps. Well...I suppose footsteps don't really apply here, since I'm only a head right now. My body was destroyed a while ago when I fell from a cliff on my way back home. My head is harder and sturdier than a rock, but my body is not quite as durable, and breaks down pretty easily. It would be nice if I could make a body as durable as my head...but...I guess that's impossible.

Plus, my body needed to be practical. I once tried making this "armored vehicle" thing in pursuit of more durability, but I wasn't able to pack much of anything in it despite its size.

Then I tried my hand at a "mini truck", supposedly a vehicle specialized in transportation, but that didn't even last a day. How can I hope to do business in these city ruins with something that won't even survive a fall from a cliff?

Indeed, for I am a shopkeeper. I run what you would call a mobile shop. I got into this business because of...umm...what was it again? There was a reason behind it, but I forgot. It happened a long time ago, after all.

Anyways, since I needed to build a new body for myself, I'm infiltrating this abandoned factory in hopes of collecting plenty of materials. I plan on using a three-wheeled vehicle instead of a four-wheeled one for my new body. I recently found the remains of an abandoned three-wheeled vehicle the other day. The body was all rusty and the wheels really worned down, but no problem, I can fix them up with magic!

I looked into some past records, and it seemed like that type of vehicle was known for its performance on uneven roads. There were plenty of visual records of it as well, so I'm sure I can recreate it perfectly!

So here I am, searching for materials. First up, natural rubber. I gotta do something about those wheels first. Though there is a slight problem. This place is rather dangerous because of all the machine lifeforms running around. Well, this place used to be called the 'robot mountain', so maybe the machine lifeforms like it here? I have to be careful to not run into any of them.

Hmm? Is that a piece of natural rubber I smell? Is it here? No, over there! My senses are tingling in the presence of high-quality materials!

Excited, I headed towards the direction of the smell. However...

"Woaaaahh!!"

A sudden blast of steam rendered my field of vision blank.

"Hm? Something's moving?"

My head's being carried somewhere. Am I on what is known as a "conveyer belt"?

"Woah! W-what's happening!?"

Materials that would clearly go into the making of a robot were lined up all nicely and being carried towards somewhere.

"I have to run....huh!?"

My head got locked in place by a mechanical arm from above. Furthermore, two cylindrical covers were approaching from my sides.

"Stoooooooop!!!!"

With a huge clank, my vision blacked out.

"Nooooo!!! Let me out!!!!!!"

No matter how much I struggled and shouted, my vision remained black. After a while, I passed out from exhaustion...

"!? Where am I!?"

My field of vision brightened considerably, and I found myself face to face with an unknown woman and boy. “What is that…?” He said as he tilted his head. You know, I’m just as confused as you are!

Who are these two? More importantly, where is this?

“Umm…and you are?”

I figured that they were androids, but…

“This thing’s weird, 2B. Let’s kill it.”

Huhhhhh!?!?

“W-woah!! Wait! Hold on!!”

I am not weird at all! If anything, you’re the sketchy looking ones! What with your pitch black outfits and black blindfolds!

“Good idea.”

“Nooo! Don’t!”

Using my high-speed movement, I got out of that place as fast as I can. I think I bumped into something…might have broken through something…but now’s not the time to be worrying about that!

…have I come far enough yet? I lowered my speed and turned around to check.

“Ohhh?”

I bumped into something soft and rolled backward.

“Hmm?? This feels like some sort of fur?”

And there’s some warm breeze coming from above…

“U-umm…”

Two white fangs loomed above me. The warm breeze was…a boar breathing down my figurative neck. In other words, I bumped into the soft sides of a boar. I did lower my speed, so I don’t think it was fatal or anything, but I’m sure being hit by my harder-than-rock head must’ve hurt…a lot.

So….the boar must be very angry….right?

“I-I”m sorryyyyy!!”

Oh no! It’s chasing after me! I really hate boars! They chase me around all the time, and they hit like a truck!

“Don’t come here!!! Don’t come hereeeeee!!”

Getting away is more difficult than I imagined! I’m getting a face full of leaves, and I hear twigs snapping all around me, but the boar is still chasing after me!

Aahhhh! I’m going to crash!! I’m going to crash into that huge trunk!

I made a sharp turn and avoided that fate! Great! I must’ve lost that boar…or so I thought! It’s still chasing after me! Seems like that boar knows how to drift. I guess they do exist…those incredibly capable boars, that is.

Not that it’s time to be distracted by those thought-….huh? Where’s the ground!?

“Uwaaaaaahh!!”

I tumbled off a cliff…it hurts. It hurts so much I thought I was gonna die. It feels like I got beaten by a hard club again and again. Though what actually happened was… I got knocked from a rock…only to bump into another…and another.

I don't know how long I've kept rolling, but when I came to, I found myself in a dim ravine. My world is still spinning.

Sigh. What terrible luck. But I guess that did get the boar off my heels, so that oughta count for something.

"Hm? This place..smells like iron?"

Iron ores are necessary to make a body as durable as my head!

I thought I was unlucky to get knocked into a ravine after getting chased around by a boar, but looks like that wasn't all bad luck. Let's start mining!

Yep, yep, here they come! High-quality iron ores! This place is overflowing with them! This is so much fun!

"Alrighty~! Gotta pick em up, and pick em up~♪ Till there's none left~♪ Huff!"

I sang myself a merry little tune, with sounds of clanking metal as the background…clanking metal…almost like…a machine… It is a machine lifeform! And not just one, but many! I thought my luck turned around, but I guess that was just my imagination…

I used magic so the iron ores stuck to me as I rolled around, leaving the ravine behind me. I returned to my residence before taking off for another abandoned factory tour to gather natural rubber. At last, I have all the materials.

And now I can begin! First, I made new tires from the natural rubber I collected. Three brand new tires. Very sturdy ones that won't bust even if I run across debris!

"Emil beaaaaam!"

The iron ores began melting from the heat. According to some records, the ideal temperature during the smelting process is around 2000°C. This is so you can separate the pig iron and other impurities. Of course, I'm not just throwing away the impurities. I divided them into small bunches and cooled them down again for future usage. I'm sure they'll come in use…somehow.

And now the race against time begins! I need to hit the iron while it's hot! That's what I read from one of those ancient records, anyways.

"Take this!"

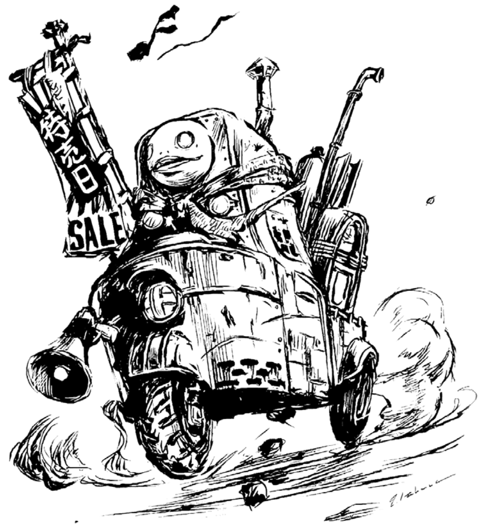
And it's done! After applying a coating of pig iron with my magic, the rusty car now looked brand new! I replaced the tires, and that's the end of it.

After that, I used some screws to affix my head to the body so it wouldn't fall off quite as easily. Doing this instead of completely gluing my head to the body leaves more room for air and feels comfier.

Not only did I load the cart with merchandise, I even paid close attention to the shop display. I found this in the past records: "How you design your booth's layout can drastically change your sales!". Another piece of important advice was "Your shop must be eye-catching even from a distance!"

So I decorated my card, put a flag to make it clear that this is a shop, and even got myself a megaphone. I hope I'll get a lot of customers…

Oh, that's right! Since I completely remodeled myself this time, I have to take some notes about the durability and ease of use! And finally…tomorrow will be the first day of the grand re-opening of Emil's shop!



[Day 1]

My new body feels great. I can plow through all kinds of terrain, be it debris filled slopes or grassy plains! I can see why this vehicle was valued for its performance on uneven roads!

But just as the records mentioned, it can tip over pretty easily when turning, so I need to put some effort into balancing myself. Gotta be conscious of that.

And there's some clipping going on with the megaphone, so maybe it needs some adjustments? But at least it's got the volume.

I just hope I'll get some customers. Oh well, I'll do my best tomorrow!

[Day 2]

My new body still feels great, but my sales...not so much.
I have to get myself some customers. Gotta work even harder tomorrow!

[Day 3]

The weather's great today. I speed between the buildings in a cheery mood.

> "Proposal: Use Pod fire to force him to stop."

Before I could ponder those words, I heard the sound of bullets. My world spun a few times before I felt a huge impact...and my engine stopped. I guess that's what they meant by forcing me to stop...

> "Owwww..."

I brought myself upright again, and I saw someone running towards me. I was taken aback by their faces.

> "Hey! I remember you from the other day!"

Yes, they were indeed the same black-clothed androids. And quite a bit more violent than the rest of their kind, if their threats of destruction upon first seeing me are any indication. Hm, that kind of reminds me of someone. It's almost as if...as if she's...huh? Who was I thinking of again?

Oh well. I gotta focus on the sales more! I finally got a customer, after all.

> "Anyway, my name is Emil. And this is my shop. Wanna buy something?"

They're my first customers after my re-opening, so I have to make them buy something!

> "How about the rusted clump? I also strongly recommend the rusted clump! Oh, and let me tell you this, but there's a huge deal going on for rusted clumps!"

The woman in black is 2B, and the boy is 9S. The two of them bought titanium alloy. But I really did think highly of that rusted clump...

> "Thank you for your purchase. I look forward to serving you again!"

I hope they'll become regulars. Gotta get down to the sale pitch, then!

> "..what was that? You want to know where I live?"

> "I didn't ask that."

It's all about the sales. A good salesperson answers questions before he gets asked!

> "Well, I live deep, deep underground. Picture something deep, then go DEEPER! Feel free to visit me anytime you want!"

After watching 2B and 9S leave, I decided to close the shop for today. I have to clean up my house so that they can drop by whenever they want.

[Day 4]

I kicked off the morning with some repairs. Since I tumbled quite a bit from yesterday's Pod fire, parts of my body were slightly damaged. The repairs don't require that much work. Easily doable before breakfast, which, uh, I've already had.

Anyways, let's start from damage inspection. Hmm...seems like the sides aren't as strong as I'd like them to be. I should expect to tumble a lot in these city ruins, after all. Maybe I should use the leftover materials to reinforce them. Well, no use in delaying it. Like always, I line up the iron ores next to each other.

> "Emil beaaaaaaam!"

And out went the impurities. Oh, right, maybe I should mix in some titanium alloy to further strengthen the material. And maybe some memory alloy too.

> "Emil cyclooooooone!"

The melted iron got mixed with the titanium alloy and memory alloy.
Now I just need to use magic to make it into coating.

> "Take this!"

Yep yep. That turned out well. I'm done repairing and reinforcing my body. And now it's time for food.

> "Hm? Did I...already have breakfast? I feel like I might've...but maybe not..?"

I can't quite remember. Every time I repair myself, it seems like I lose a bit of my memory.

> "Oh well."

Time for breakfast.

[Day 5]

I'm swapping out all the goods for sale today, because I took the time to polish up some weapons yesterday.
And they turned out much cooler looking than I thought! Absolutely splendid!
I have to go and sell them now. I'm sure those two will be happy!

I rushed out of my residence in a hurry. The city ruins flashed by in an instant. I'm going all out today with the high speeds. I really, really want someone to buy these, after all!

But maybe I'm going too fast? My thoughts were immediately disrupted by the sounds of bullet shots, and my world began spinning again, aaand here comes the impact....yep, it is 2B and 9S.

2B keeps to herself most of the time, but 9S is very talkative. He's very curious as well, and always talks to me with an interested look.

> "Hm? Why am I selling like this? Well..there's no end to that topic if we get down to it..."

Those are the kinds of topics that should be discussed over a cup of tea, maybe when you guys finally visit me?
It is a really long story, after all. A long, long time ago...long ago...huh? What happened?

Nevermind, not the time to be thinking about that! Focus on the sales, and only the sales.

"Anyways, would you like to buy something? I have some great weapons in stock today.
Like Type-3 Fists and Angel's Folly. Type-3 Fists and Angel's Folly."

I had to repeat myself because those two weapons are just that awesome. And it paid off in the end - 2B and 9S bought both of those weapons. They seemed pretty happy with their purchase, so I'm glad.

I inspected my body for any damages as soon as I got back. But thanks to the reinforcements I made, I didn't get any significant dents today. Just a couple of scratches.

On another note, my brakes weren't working quite as well as I'd like them to. I don't think I should be putting out too much speed, after all.

[Day 6]

I made a slight deviation from my usual route and headed towards the steel tower instead. Doing the same things over and over again can lead to a quick decline.
It's important to explore new options and venues for sales.

There's quite a bit of grass surrounding the steel tower, so it's a little bit hard to navigate. I can't let something like that defeat me, though! How else am I going to be successful in this business? I am a professional, I go wherever my customer wants me to! It's my duty to transfer materials, no matter what happens!
Yes, because I am...umm....umm? What was it? I was just about to recall something...

"Oh! Over there!"

A couple of figures dashed across the hanging bridge. Judging from those black clothes, it must be 2B and 9S.

The two of them crossed the bridge and headed towards the remains of the shopping mall. The place of our first meeting! How nostalgic...and just a little bit scary.

That's right, I need to ask their opinions on the weapons they bought recently, how easy they are to use and such. What if I offered them free maintenance too? Would they like that?

I decided to cross the bridge to go after them, but...the bridge looks dangerously unstable.
Will it even hold my weight without breaking?

Oh, but I just need to use magic! That's what it's there for!
I don't know if I can levitate all that well in this form though...

"Here I go!"

I did it. My body is pretty heavy, so I can only manage to float about 50cm above ground, but it's more than enough to cross the bridge.

I made it across the bridge in a hurry. The entrance to the shopping mall was surrounded by rocks and debris, so I decided to keep floating for ease of movement.

"Hmm. That's a strange flower."

I heard 9S's voice, followed by the floating box beside him answering. They call those pods, right?

"Analysis: It is a plant known as a Lunar Tear."

My eyes widened at the pod's words.

Lunar Tear? I feel like...I've heard that name before. I looked closer and saw a white flower blooming at 9S and 2B's feet. It looked familiar to me.

"Lunar Tear.."

"Huh? When did you get here?!"

9S turned around in shock.

"So this flower is called a Lunar Tear.."

Where have I seen this flower before? I really want to remember, but I can't...

"Seeing that dredges up all kinds of memories. Some of them are a bit strange, honestly.
Like the one where I'm being attacked by a giant boar over and over again..."

I'm sure that's where my fear of boars came from. Though I have a tingling feeling that I was always with someone else during those boar assaults, and that I tried really, really hard to look for them...is this just my imagination?

"Or another where I keep trying out new parts every time my body is damaged..."

"Sounds rough."

My body isn't quite as tough as my head, after all. I'm trying out a new body model right now. But I probably had another type of body back then...that's strange, though.
Why would I need any sort of body that doesn't specialize in transportation?

"Something about this flower fills me with an emotion I don't really understand. It's like something's pushing down my chest really hard..."

What is this feeling? A little bit of sadness, a little bit of loneliness. It fills my heart with warmth, but also pain. It feels like a mix of everything, yet unlike anything else.

"So, um...do you mind if I ask you a favor?"

I probably shouldn't ask my customers for a favor, but I couldn't help it.
I got the feeling that I must get to the bottom of this.

"If you find Lunar Tears growing anywhere else, would you let me know?
I want to try and figure out what this feeling is about."

Where does this feeling come from? What is it directed towards?

"So please, if you find another Lunar Tear, just let me know on this frequency, all right?"

"Alright."

2B's response was curt, but also gentle. I was immediately reminded of "someone else".

[Day 12]

I received a transmission from 9S while I was doing my rounds next to a tipping building.

"Hey there, what's up?"

I felt my heart pounding as I answered. This must be them telling me about the Lunar Tear they found.

"We found a Lunar Tear. It's located at-"

Their location data indicated that they were in the desert.
And I'm right at the entrance to the desert. What a lucky day!

"Stay right there! I'm coming!"

I have to go there! As fast as I can! Not a second to spare! ....here we go!

"Sorry to keep you!!"

"Woah!?"

9S exclaimed in surprise. I don't think it's that shocking, though. Anyways, I need to see the Lunar Tear.
I looked at the ground where 2B and 9S stood. A pure white flower blossoming from the sand shook against the breeze. The color...this combination of sand and white petals...I've definitely seen this color before.

"Oh hey...now that I think about it, this whole area was once..."

"Are you remember something?"

"It's all pretty fuzzy, but I seem to have a memory of caring for this flower a long time ago..."

The Lunar Tear was a picky flower, so I remember taking accurate measures of the temperature and humidity, and I would always water on a set schedule...

"But the sand kept expanding, and the flowers gradually wilted."

I didn't want them to wilt. I can't have them wilt. But the sand and dryness of the desert showed no mercy.

"Now that I think about it, that was around the same time I stopped seeing people."

"You mean humans?"

The desert was soon overrun with just wolves, and the cities around the desert became devoid of people... and I was left alone.

Hmm? That's strange. I don't think that was quite the time I became alone.
But why? It felt like the fragments of my memories were getting mixed up.

"Thanks a bunch for finding this. Really. Oh, and let me know if you find any more, okay?"

Maybe I'll remember something when I see this flower in other places.
My memories were probably wonky because I was missing so many pieces.

"I'm gonna...stay here for a bit."

I wanted to look at this flower just a bit longer.

[Day 16]

The next transmission from 9S came when I got my tire stuck in a pile of debris.

"Hey, what's up?"

I can already see where this is going. 9S is probably going to tell me that they found a Lunar Tear.

"We found a Lunar Tear. It's located at..."

See? I was right!

"Stay right there! I'm coming!"

This is not time to be stuck! Getting from here to the amusement park that 9S was in won't be an easy task.
I gotta hurry. I have to get there. Faster! And faster! ....here I go!

"Sorry to keep you!"

"You're fast!?"

9S looked super shocked this time. I mean...is it really all that surprising? But more importantly, the Lunar Tear. I looked towards the ground around 9S and 2B's feet. A white flower blossomed below a set of rusted stairs, almost buried within all the debris.

Sounds of fireworks intermixed with the music that the robots were playing. Low and irregular tones.

"That's it, I remember now..."

The sounds and heat of cannonfire. The smell of something burning.

“Back when the aliens first invaded...I fought as hard as I could to save Earth.”

I had to defeat the aliens. I had to chase them away from this planet. A new fragment surfaced in my memories.
Memories of a battle, so intense that the mere thought of it rendered me breathless.

“You did?”

“I think...I had something to protect. Something really precious to me. But I don’t know what it was...”

That piece of information wasn’t in any of the fragments I recovered.
It was an important piece of memory that I never wanted to lose, but it just...wasn’t there anymore.

“Thank you for finding this. You’ll let me know if you find more, right?
....I’m gonna...stay here for a bit.”

I wanted to look at this flower just a bit longer...but...looking at it also brought me pain.

[Day 19]

The third transmission from 9S came when I was on my way to the abandoned factory for materials.

“Yes, what is it?”

They must’ve found another Lunar Tear. Gotta bring up 9S’s location data.

“We found another...”

“I’ll be there!”

There’s quite a bit of distance from here to the sunken city that 9S is in. I found myself panicking slightly.
Gotta get there right away! Faster and faster! ...here I go!

“Sorry to keep you!”

“Fast...as always.”

9S appeared more resigned than surprised this time. But the Lunar Tear is more important!
I looked behind 2B and 9S. A white flower was blooming from the cracks between rocks, almost as if it was clinging on to the rocks so it wouldn’t get blown away by the ocean breeze.
The sound of waves resounded within me.

“Oh, that’s right...”

This coastline. The sunken buildings and the cries of the seagulls.

“What happened here, Emil?”

A battle against aliens, I answered. Yes, I was responsible for this coastline area.

“I was fighting the aliens. It...wasn’t going well.
So I decided to create multiple versions of myself to help with the fight.”

To fight an enemy whose might was in numbers, I had to resort to playing the numbers game myself.

“But the aliens just kept coming...I lost so many friends that day.”

There wasn’t even a spare moment to mourn for my friends’ deaths. I focused on replicating myself even more, throwing myself straight into the frontlines, and suffering just as many losses...rinse and repeat.

“It was a long time ago.”

I see, 9S nodded in acknowledgment, then tilted his head.

“Emil, how old are you anyway?”

“I’m not sure.”

Maybe I’ve lived for so long I don’t remember it all. Maybe I haven’t lived for much at all. I don’t really know.

“I didn’t need that memory to fight.”

Me and the others...we just needed to focus on protecting the Earth from the aliens. That’s all there is to it.

“Thank you for finding this. You’ll let me know if you find any more, right?
I’m gonna...stay here a bit.”

I wanted to spend more time looking at this small white flower, trying its hardest to survive. At the same time, I didn’t want to recall any more memories. I’ve grown scared of remembering.

[Day 23]

I looked up 9S’s location data before his transmission even reached me.
I knew I had to get to where 9S was. ...here I go!

“Sorry to keep you!”

“I didn’t even contact you yet!”

The moment I saw 2B and 9S appear before my eyes, I realized I had been using teleportation magic all along.
That’s how important the Lunar Tear was to me.
A precious, important flower that I simply must get to, no matter what. So I used magic unconsciously.
Such potent magic that I didn’t even realize I was using it.
I see. This powerful magic originally belonged to....and this flower...

“Emil? Are you okay?”

9S’s worried voice brought me back to reality.

“I just remembered...I...”

“Hmm?”

“Thank you again. You’ve helped me remember an important place.”

“Oh?”

“A place very special to “him”...”

I forgot about “him”, who dearly treasured this white flower and the memories surrounding it.

“In thanks, I’ll show you how to visit it..”

I took out an old key. Though I’ve forgotten about its existence, I never once let it slip from my grasp. I kept it with me, not even knowing what this key is used for...

“It’ll let you access the elevator in the shopping mall.”

Now that I think about it, maybe meeting 2B and 9S there, and seeing them find the first Lunar Tear...wasn’t so much of a coincidence.

“I’m sorry, I need to stay here for a while. You go on ahead..”

I found my resolve wavering again. I remembered too much of everything, and the memories left me in confusion. I needed some time to calm my emotions and organize my thoughts.

But actually, it didn’t take that long for me to sort it all out. Maybe I’ve already made up my mind before this. To not get overwhelmed if I ever remember everything, so that I can carry out my mission.

The elevator in the shopping mall still functioned like it did in the past. Everything remained the same, from the sound of the doors opening and closing, to the irregular shaking of the elevator itself.

I heard 9S's voice as soon as the elevator reached the lowest floor and the doors opened. Those two didn't get here much earlier than I did.

> "Wow! Look at all the Lunar Tears!"

> "Where are we?"

The two of them surveyed their surroundings in surprise. Never in their dreams would they have expected an area deep below the shopping mall to house so many white flowers.

> "Thank you for coming."

> "Emil, what is this place?" 2B asked, slightly disoriented.

> "It's the place from my memories that I worked too hard to protect. Or, to be exact, the place protected by the person I used to be."

9S tilted his head in confusion.

> "Er, sorry, I don't get it."

He prodded me for more information, so I began my tale.
The tale of 'us', that I never thought I'd tell to another being.

> "A long time ago, I was created to be a weapon."

> "You're...a weapon...?"

Long before the aliens came to Earth, in a time when humans were everywhere. I....the person I used to be...was a normal, human child. Until he was transformed into an experimental weapon.

> "When the war against the aliens started, I decided to strengthen that weapon by creating copies of myself."

> "Copies?"

> "So in truth, I'm only one of the countless Emils."

To correct my earlier statement, I wasn't the one who made the copies, but the one I used to be. The original Emil. He wanted to protect this planet, no matter how heavy a price. This place where his friends, whom he valued more than himself, had once lived.

> "I...or we, I guess, worked with each other to keep our defensive lines intact. But the more of ourselves we created, the more our original memories began to fade. "

I didn't have many memories from when the original Emil still had a human form. The fact that he had a different form to begin with was something I'd heard from another Emil. On the other hand, that same Emil didn't know about this place. The memories each of us held were fragmented in different ways.

> "The original Emil liked this place a lot."

Everything important to him could be found here. He recreated the small hut his dear friend lived in, and grew flowers that the person he loved once nurtured, remembering all the good times they had together...

> "There were tough times...and sad times... But the memories of that journey were the original Emil's greatest treasure."

Though I've never experienced it personally, his emotions remained in the memories left with me. But they're very faint, and feel like they could disappear at a moment's notice.

> "Where is the original Emil right now?"

> "I don't know. There were so many of us that after a while, we just..."

"Oh.."

Though we made tens and thousands of copies, many of them perished in the war. All to fulfill the original Emil's desire to protect this world that he and his friends spent time in.

"Thank you both. You've helped me find some of my precious memories."

Though I was once scared of these memories, I can say with full confidence now that I'm glad to have them back.

"Now I'll be able to keep pushing forward, even if I'm alone."

I will keep on fighting, even if I became the last one standing. As long as I have these memories...

[Day 33]

I stayed home for two days after I showed 2B and 9S to the place beneath the shopping mall. I needed some time to think over some things. After that, I ran around the city ruins as usual and waited for my customers. However, nobody approached me. Not even 2B or 9S.

I went to check out the shopping mall as well, but neither of them was there.

There was an intense battle at the sunken city a couple of days ago...I wonder if they're alright? My worries are probably for nothing, though, I can see how strong those two have grown since our first meeting. Maybe they moved somewhere far, far away. I kinda did want them to visit, at least once... I wanted to say goodbye...

[Day 54]

I saw 2B and 9S today for the first time in a long while. I wanted to call out to them, but they were currently locked in combat, so I restrained myself.

A couple of small machine lifeforms and two quadrupeds. There's quite a number of them, but neither of them seemed particularly bothered by it. They fought so splendidly that I was sure I would only get in their way if I were to join. I took my leave quietly and crossed the bridge. I wanted to see a Lunar Tear for one last time.

It's a legendary flower that's said to grant any wish, but will it grant mine?

I'm pretty doubtful of that legend, though, because no matter how hard he worked to nurture these flowers, he couldn't cure his sister's sickness. And she who received the Lunar Tear hair accessory as a present, never did....no, but that's just pure guesswork from "the person I used to be".

There's no way my wish will come true, either. I know this. So I don't expect anything.
But even with the knowledge that my wishes won't come true, I can't help but try anyway.

"Emil."

I turned around to face 2B. Thought they fought off waves of enemies, the two of them got out of that battle completely unscathed.

"Wow, you've sure gotten strong."

And I don't mean to claim that the weapons I sold you had any part in it. I'm sure those two can keep on defeating enemies even without those weapons.

"I doubt you'll be needing my help anymore."

"What do you mean?"

"Um, nothing. Don't worry about it."

I'm glad I caught you guys here. Now I can say my farewells.

"Take care."

I took off in a hurry. It was a race against time. I had to stop them before it was too late.

My duty during that war was providing support from the back. I never stopped moving, carrying the materials needed by the Emils that were fighting on the frontlines. My body was made this small so I could run around the battlefield easily, and my body was shaped like this so I could carry materials.

We were assigned different sizes and shapes according to our responsibilities. The Emils on the frontlines who were responsible for attacking the enemy had high firepower, and the Emils responsible for holding the defensive lines had reinforced armor.

The original Emil seemed to think that 'variety' is the key to achieving victory against a foe that had superior numbers. Just like how humans flourished by adopting different lifestyles and cultures.

Day after day, I would run around on my own. Every day I would head towards what is now known as the sunken city, taking supplies with me. I brought with me materials required to repair those who were damaged and materials needed to recharge those who ran out of mana. And my companions grew steadily more solemn as the days passed. Though we once cheered each other on as we took to the battlefield together, the amount of words we exchanged became far more sparse with our diminishing ranks.

At the same time, more and more of my own memories disappeared. Every time I replace a part of my body for repairs, I lose a bit of memory. The fewer parts I have left on me from the original Emil, the fewer memories of the past I retain.

Unlike the Emils made for battle, I was not equipped with durable armor. Since I was lightweight, I would often go flying whenever enemy missiles landed near me. I was a near-constant presence on the battlefield, and so was perpetually damaged in some shape or form. I had to repair and replace parts of my body every day, and out went the memories of the original Emil.

But that was also a form of salvation. At some point, his memories became too much to bear for me. Those memories belonged to the original Emil, and not me. Even if I had them, they might as well be fake to me. Every time a memory slipped away, I felt a sense of relief. Eventually, I even learned how to shut them all out. I ran away from the bad times and sad times.

By then, our defensive lines were all but broken. No matter how many copies we made of ourselves, we couldn't catch up with the rate at which new enemies were appearing. The aliens strengthened their own forces with machine lifeforms. Just like us, the robots were able to adapt to any kind of environment.

However, it wasn't a completely one-sided battle. A large number of androids came and joined the fray. They took over the battle against the aliens, though it wasn't going so well for them either...

Ever since I got separated from the rest of my companions, I lost even more of the memories I inherited from the original Emil, and ended up running a shop and selling goods to androids in the city ruins.
Strangely enough, I retained my drive to 'deliver materials'.

If I'd never met 2B or 9S, I would've never regained these memories, and would have kept running around the city ruins without remembering who I truly was...without realizing how much suffering my companions were going through. I've been hearing their screams and laments for a while now, but I never understood what they meant. I wrote them off as strange and somewhat unnerving sounds from the desert.

But I have to go now. To where everyone else is.

I used the teleportation magic I'd just learned. The remnants of buildings disappeared from my view instantly, and I found myself surrounded by sand. The huge round objects I saw before me were the Emils that specialized in offense.

I remembered the days when I carried materials to them in the frontlines. They were all kind. Though they were exhausted, worn, and beaten, they would always thank me for my work.

We joined our forces and fought as hard as we could. The Emils on the battlefield really treasured their companions, and it felt like they were part of a big family. I was just a little bit jealous, since support types like me basically operate alone most of the times, and rarely do I ever run into another Emil of the same type.

But I'm sure their camaraderie made it worse for them to lose more of their companions. Because they treated each other like family, it must've been painful...unable to do anything as they abandoned their powerless companions to their fates.

"Everyone..."

I don't think they recognize me anymore. I heard growling that sounded like it was coming from a beast. Those were the Emils that had gone insane. It hurts, it hurts...they cry out. Save me...they scream.

"Eternity...it hurts...it hurts..."

A few thousand years have passed since the aliens' arrival. These Emils were constantly fighting during that time, a time that felt like eternity.

"Why...why us..."

Copies were made, over and over again. Necessitated by the countless numbers we've lost.

"We...we must...kill them all!"

"No, you can't!"

"We don't need this world!"

"Please, I beg you!"

But my voices didn't reach them. I didn't even know what to say to persuade them. Because I knew...that their suffering is endless, no matter what.

"All of you, stop it!"

I was blown away the moment I shouted. They had the power to wage war against the aliens, there was no way I could stand up to them. But I needed to stop them. I headed towards them, again and again, only to be knocked back each time. My body dented, my tires lose...and eventually...I laid upon the sand, unable to move an inch.

"Emil!"

I heard 2B's voice.

"Are you alright?"

9S looked worried. They must've picked up on my strange behavior and followed me.

"Emil...what's that?"

"Those are...what happened to my clones...years of multiplying...years of fighting in wars...their sense of self just...deteriorated..."

My companions lost their sanity while in possession of great power. I can't just let them be.

"I need to settle things with them...on my own."

"Enough! You just stay here!"

The two of them left me for the gigantic Emils. I didn't even have the strength to stop them. Every now and then, the sounds around me would fade out and I could feel myself slipping into unconsciousness. Is this what it means to die?

"We tried our best! In the rain. In the wind. In the storm."

La la la....la la la...they sang.

"Even when our companions died, we kept on fighting!"

I remembered the Emils who grew more and more withdrawn. They could only withhold their words, because otherwise they would give in to cursing their own fate and bitter resentment...

"But the eternal war...our eternal pain...the eternal pain! It screamed at us! It told us there was nothing of value to protect in this world...the world had no meaning! It screamed at us!"

Their ugly laughter echoed. "Alert: Elemental output of magical weapons increased", the Pod warned.

"You...all of you! This pain! This sadness! This desperation! You know nothing about it!!!!!"

I understood immediately what they were attempting to do. They were trying to self-destruct by releasing all of their pent up magic at once, taking with them the world that brought them such suffering.

The world? This world? This mad world?

A voice broke into my thoughts. It was rough and curt, but also somewhat gentle...yes, it's her voice, the one I thought was familiar to 2B. I could also hear a voice that sounded like a lecturing grandpa, and a third, calm and gentle voice.

Memories of the original Emil flooded my mind. The memories that he so treasured; memories of his journey.

> "But even so...all of this is wrong!"

I yelled, hoping to rekindle the same memories, slumbering deep within my companion's hearts even as they lost their sense of self.

> "No matter how hard or how painful...they never gave up! They kept fighting because they believed they could overcome someday! Isn't that right, Kainé?!"

I was inferior in every aspect from offense to defense, but I have to do this. I can't give up!

> "Because this is the world my friend tried to save!"

I felt a shock ripple through my companions. Though the memories we share are fragmented, with only mere traces left...in the end, we still remember...him.

I gathered up all the magic within me. One final struggle to prevent my companions' self-destruction.

Everything became quiet. I can only hear the sounds of the wind. I'm still alive.

> "I can't believe...I remembered something so important...right at the end..."

Even though they weren't my memories, the sadness of losing someone precious to me cuts deep. I found that painful, and so I sought escape. I put a lid on those memories, and tried my hardest to forget. And I ended up letting go of memories I shouldn't have.

I couldn't hear my companions anymore. Seems like we managed to stop their self-destruction. 2B and 9S probably had a hand in it.

> "I'm sorry...for causing you so much trouble...2B, 9S..."

2B shook her head silently. 9S tried to cheer me up by saying that he could repair me. What kind-hearted people they are.

The two of them were caught in an intense war themselves, but they certainly didn't act like that. Why were people able to remain kind even in the midst of these repeating, merciless battles? That's right, he was very kind too...

My consciousness is slipping away. Many memories, some of which were not my own, started disappearing as well.

But that's fine. I've done enough, I thought to myself as I let myself go.

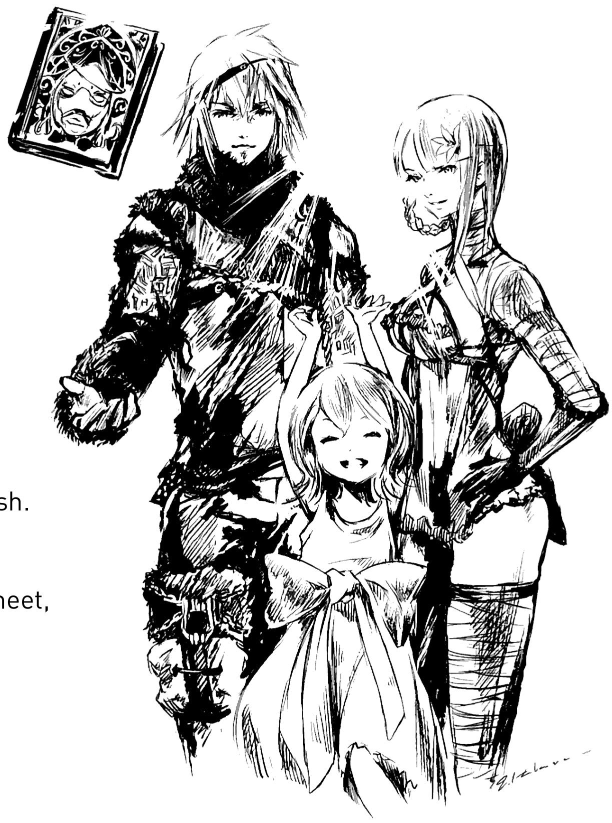
Emil, I heard a voice calling out to me. It was neither 2B or 9S, but a voice that brought back memories. I lifted my face in surprise. Don't tell me...

Through my hazy vision, I saw people smiling and waving at me. There's even a floating book!

I got to meet them...I really did. The Lunar Tear granted my wish.

> "Welcome home, Emil. You did well."

I got up immediately and ran towards the ones I so longed to meet, calling out that name, so dear to me, over and over again.



YOKO FACT 25 - Interview for GameInformer by Imran Khan (01/01/2019)

https://www.gameinformer.com/2019/01/01/talking-to-yoko-taro-platinumgames-takahisa-taura-and-composer-keiichi-okabe-about-life

Kaine's shack that's found underground was built from scratch by the original Emil at one point and bred all the Lunar Tears. Then, after that, a copy took care of it.
Also, the original Emil is still alive.

With Automata, you started appearing at press conferences and as part of the marketing of the game, whereas previously you never did that. When you appear in public, you have been wearing a mask of Emil from the first NieR title. Why Emil specifically?

Hmm. One of the answers I can give is that, and I do have a little more that I want to elaborate on, is that for one Emil in the previous title is just a strong character on its own, so it's more like an iconic image or character for NieR as a series. Another part of the answer is that Emil actually holds a great secret of the part of the NieR world and it's not all revealed with the games I've created so far. I'm not sure if I'll have an opportunity to disclose that secret, but if I do, I might one day create a game that delves more into why it's Emil and why I continue to wear Emil's mask.

A common through-line for Yoko-san's games is flowers: the lunar tear in the NieR series, the flower in Zero's eye in Drakengard 3, is that symbolizing anything in your games or is it just visual imagery you like?

Well, I do like flowers in general, but yes, there is a greater meaning to it that I have with these flowers. It's the same as Emil like I talked about earlier, I just haven't revealed it anywhere.
There is a meaning, which is why they keep on coming back in my games, but I haven't revealed it anywhere yet.

For the original NieR, there was a lot of information on the periphery of the game like books with background information and short stories that answer questions raised in the game. Automata even had a stage play predating the game. Do you think it's harder for western fans to grasp the whole stories of these games when there's Japanese-exclusive media about it expanding the lore?

Of course, we can't localize everything because we have limitations in budget, so it's really difficult to do all of that, but I actually think there really isn't a need to know everything, either. The meaning I have behind Emil's mask or the flowers you asked about, like I said it's not revealed in the game at all or anywhere else yet, but no one really needs to know that to enjoy the game or enjoy the world or enjoy the game. More than gaining knowledge, I want players to cherish the experience they have when playing the game. It's more about that instead of the knowledge they could have for every question. Of course, the theatrical stage play was more of like a YoRHa spinoff, but you don't need to know that to enjoy the game. Every piece, like the books and the stage play, is made in a way so that you can enjoy it by yourself, so you don't need that extra knowledge to enjoy it.

It may add a little bit depth to the knowledge that you have, but you don't necessarily need to have it. I do understand the otaku mentality that you want to know everything, you want to have everything answered, you want to collect everything, but I don't see the value in knowing everything. For example, just in real life, you might not know everything about the politics that surround the world or even in your own country, and there's really no point in knowing everything that happens in the world. Maybe a lot of things, but not everything, right? What's more important is how you interact with people around you, immediately around you, and I think that's the same with video games. You don't really need to know everything that happens in the world to enjoy it.

Of course, I do respect the freedom that the players feel as well, so if you do get mad that we can't localize everything in America, or America never gets everything, that's also something to be respected and I do understand the frustrations surrounding that as well.

NieR Music Concert: Precious Things

Translation by /u/ilfans

A short Story that extends on 9S and 2B relationship, during their time together and after 2B's death. It also gives us some insight on 9S' reaction to the virus in the last part of the game.

Scene 1: 9S

Pod 042 (narration):	Everything that lives is designed to end. "They" are perpetually trapped ... ... in a never-ending spiral of life and death. Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment? "They" often think about the god who blessed "them" with this cryptic puzzle ... ... and wonder if "they'll" ever have the chance to kill him.
2B (narration):	When I met him "that time" ... it was during our mission to destroy the Goliath-class weapon.
9S:	You're 2B, right? My name's 9S. I'm here to provide support.
2B (narration):	The No.9 Type S model is a high-end model. And it's because of that there's a constant danger of them coming into contact with confidential information. That's why I've been tasked with the duty of eliminating him ... Over ... and over ... But ... he was different this time.
9S:	Scanners like me mostly work alone. Scouting out enemy lines and all that? I don't usually get a partner. It's kind of fun!
2B (narration):	I simply ignored him when he'd speak. If I were to grow close to him, it'd only become more difficult to kill him. Even so, he wouldn't stop trying to make conversation with me. (9S speaks with a bright tone.)
9S:	Say, 2B? Don't you think this white flower would look good on you?
2B:	I have no need for it.
9S:	Aw, are you sure?
2B:	Attaching a plant to my hair would do nothing for my combat abilities. Rather, it would more likely cause maintenance failure.
9S:	Hahah. Man, 2B, you're way too serious, you know that?
2B (narration):	I made a promise with 9S in the past. A promise that I'd continue to kill him, without fail. The 9S from back then, and the 9S before me, are two different people. That fact ... makes my chest tighten.
Pod 042:	Pod 042 to YoRHa unit 2B. Report: Detecting errors occurring within unit 2B's memory region, likely due to unstable psychological state. Proposal: Moderate rest should cause improvement.

2B (narration):	I've already been aware of that for a long time ... But ... the day I'm freed from this pain ... will be the day I die.
Pod 042:	Mail notification received from Command.
2B (narration):	I wonder if I was afraid. Or perhaps I was wrong. Even so, I continued on by his side, without even knowing the name of the emotion I'd been feeling.

Scene 2: 2B

9S (narration):	2B and I first met in one of the hallways in the Bunker. I'd received an announcement from the Commander that I'd be working with a partner this time. I was ... a little uneasy about it. Scanner models like me usually work alone. And ... I'd always gotten the impression that No.2 models were somewhat cold. So when she said those things to me in the hallway, I was ... kind of surprised.
2B:	9S?
9S:	Yeah?
	(A short pause)
2B:	Thank you. For uploading my data to the Bunker.
9S:	... Um, I did that? Sorry, I don't remember. There wasn't a whole lot of bandwidth down there, you know? I probably only had enough time to back up your memories. Mines are only intact up to the point just before we rendezvoused.
2B:	... I see.
9S (narration):	Things started out so awkward. At least, until that day ... It happened after a battle.
Pod 042:	Confirming the annihilation of all machine lifeforms in this area.
9S:	Whew ...
2B:	So we've destroyed every machine lifeform here?
Pod 042:	Affirmative: No responses from any machine lifeforms in this area.
2B:	Understood.
9S:	(9S notices something.) Huh? Hey, 2B ... did something happen to your right hand?
2B:	My right hand ...? Oh, this. I must've injured my finger during the previous battle.
9S:	Gah! You're — You're bleeding!
	(9S becomes panicked.)
9S:	Pod! Get me staunching gel and logic-virus vaccines! Then — uh —
Pod 042:	Inadvisable. There is a high probability that excessive treatment will cause a decrease in movement efficiency to the unit ...
9S:	Just shut up and do it already!

2B: ... 9S, don't you think you're overreacting?

9S: Huh? Not you too, 2B!

2B: Just leave it. The nanomachines will heal it just fine on their own.

9S: Er, I guess so ...

(9S looks a little disappointed.)

Pod 042: Confirmation of mission completion by enemy annihilation.
Recommendation: Report results to Command.

(9S peers over at 2B.)

9S: Um ... 2B?

2B: What is it?

9S: You think we could at least use the staunching gel? If contaminants enter the bloodstream they'll be difficult to remove, and if it's just staunching gel, then it shouldn't cause any problems to your motor functions, so, you know, just in case ...

2B: (2B looks slightly amazed.) ... All right.

9S: Got it! Then I'll go ahead and prepare it right away! Now where's that case ...

2B: 9S.

9S: Yeah, 2B?

(A small pause.)

2B: ... Thank you.

(2B seems a little happy.)

9S (narration): I can't remember anymore what my response was when she said that.
Just that I was so happy to be useful to someone.
What was most important to me ... was being together with 2B.

... At least. Until the day that YoRHa fell, along with the Bunker ...

Scene 3: Infection

Pod 042 (narration): Large-scale attack ended in failure. The Bunker has collapsed.
Black-box signal for YoRHa unit 2B offline. Death confirmed.

A large "tower" produced by machine lifeforms rose within the city ruins.

Having lost a place to return to, unit 9S aimed for nothing more than the top of that "tower". In order to destroy the machine lifeforms which caused this nightmare.
And to end himself as well.

(9S is contaminated and is breathing roughly.)

9S (narration): Haah ... Haah ... I have to ... apply the vaccine ...

Pod 042 (narration): The virus corrodes his body. His thought process breaks down.
Sound recordings found in the flooded city play back in his mind.

	(2B is contaminated by the virus, muttering in pain.)
2B:	9S ... The time I was able to spend with you ... It was like memories of pure light ... Thank you ... Nine ... s ...
9S:	(9S begins crying upon hearing that.) Ngh ... Ghh ...
Pod 042 (narration):	Those memories are his greatest treasure. Living together, fighting together. They were like a family.
9S:	2B ...
Pod 042 (narration):	9S holds that recording deep within his heart. Treating it as if it were truly a treasure.
9S:	2B ... I ... I'll be with you before long ...
Pod 042 (narration):	Reality and fiction blend together. With clouded consciousness, unit 9S carries himself forward, his legs heavy. He'll defeat as many enemies as possible, even if he is alone. As if in response to that wish, a new enemy appears.
9S:	Khh ...
Pod 042 (narration):	Many enemies appear in front of him. They're ... androids. They're ... YoRHa units.
9S:	2B models?
Pod 042 (narration):	The person he treasures above all else. Someone who resides in a location out of his reach.
9S:	Heh ... Heheheh ... I'm glad I got to see you here. I truly am.
	(9S gives a distorted smile.)
9S:	I'll tear you apart ... Every last one of you!
Pod 042 (narration):	9S draws his sword. Is this an act of murderous intent? Or is it perhaps done out of love? It's no longer possible to tell.

Scene 4: Treasure

Pod 042 (narration):	Contamination from the logic virus is getting worse. Nearly 80% of his memory is contaminated, and his thought circuits are severely damaged.
9S:	Dammit ... I can't ... remove ... The vaccine ... it'll no longer ...
Pod 042 (narration):	Unit 9S knows that there's only one solution left that could dispel the contamination. To lock his personal data and reformat his entire system. To throw away all of his current memories, and be reborn anew.
9S:	(9S speaks as if in response to the Pod's narration.) No ... I can't do that ... No matter how contaminated I become ... I can't lose this memory ...
	(9S screams out, suffering.) If that's my only choice ... then I'm better off dead!

Pod 042 (narration):	9S is fighting with fear itself. To have one's personal data contaminated means to lose one's ability to think for themselves. To androids, that is a fate worse than death.
9S:	I am who I am ... because of 2B ... I have a reason to live ... because of those memories ... So ... please ... don't take them from me ...
Pod 042 (narration):	To him, calling her family feels too unreasonable. But calling her a lover feels too distant.
9S:	Machines ... A2 ... It doesn't matter ... I'll kill every last one of you! 2B ... I ...
Pod 042 (narration):	Within the corners of his eroding consciousness, 9S continues to protect his memories of 2B. Even if ... his actions are completely meaningless in the eyes of the world.
2B:	I am ... No.2 ... Type E. I was created to execute my fellow YoRHa soldiers.
9S:	I'd already ... I'd already realized that ...
2B:	The mission I had been assigned over and over again. Was to kill you, 9S.
9S:	(9S is crying.) Stop it ... Enough already ... 2B. Even if you were trying to kill me, I ... Being with you, it truly ... It felt like I'd found a family.
2B:	Hey ... 9S? I wonder ... Were the choices we made wrong?
Pod 042 (narration):	Within a pure white tower. A small boy walks. Suffering. Uneasy. Holding within him many small, important memories. They're of ... the time the two of them spent together. His memories of those days ... were most precious to him.

Machine lifeforms' last thoughts

"...Go on. Finish me. Even if I'd achieved my revenge, I was planning to die regardless. My friends are dead. My family is dead. You killed them all and left me alone. I don't have the strength to continue. It...hurts...I'm sorry, everyone...I couldn't avenge you...Accursed androids... How much longer will you torment us!? You damn monsters! Glory to us...Glory to my family!"

- Courageous Brother

"I...exist...this world...My...life's meaning...The meaning...of being born...

To exist, I must be strong...Merely destroying life will not win me approval...But if so...what use are we to the world...? It is painful... So painful... Why were we...born...? Why is life...so painful...? Why won't anyone...help me...? I don't need...this world...

We were created to fight! To eliminate all others and reside at the pinnacle of existence! Yet the battle rages eternal! Our cursed cycle of destruction and rebirth continues without end! None of us in this world is loved! This world has no need for us! There is only one solution..."

- Wise Machine's last words before plunging to its death.

9S' Memories

※ Following his fight to death with A2, 9S's vital functions start to shut down, and his memories begin to disappear. On the verge of death, however, 9S finds his resolve.

> "I'm..."
>
> "My name is..."
>
> "My name...is 9S."
> "A newly manufactured Scanner model."
> "January 30th, 11942."
> "Rolled out at 4:25 AM, Bunker time."
> "I will fight for humanity with all my strength."
> "The pleasure is mine, Commander."

I lie collapsed in a space of blinding white.
The pain is...gone. The light envelops me. It's so warm.

I was anxious.
A soldier from the moment I was born, thrown into the world alone.
Nothing to rely on. No god to believe in.

I was alone.
Tasked with infiltrating enemy territory to gather intelligence.

In the fog.
In the flames.
Alone.

> "My name's 9S. I'm here to provide support."

2B came off as being rather aloof. Cold, even.
She must have wanted to distance herself from me.
I guess she didn't want to be attached to someone she had to kill again and again and again.

But... I...

> "Scanners like me mostly work alone. Scouting out enemy lines and all that?"
> "I don't usually get a partner. It's kind of fun!"

I was so happy to be with someone.

It was like I had a family.

My damage worsens.
I start to lose my memories.
The space fills up with pure white light.
It's like being buried in snow.

It's a little bit cold.
It's a little bit frightening.
Will my soul...disappear?

A dark fog clouds my vision. As it ebbs and flows in its slow, dreamlike way, it gradually takes human shape.

It’s the red girl.

She slowly begins to speak.

This tower is a colossal cannon built to destroy the human server.
Destroy the server...and rob the androids of their very foundation.
That was the plan devised by those girls.

But they changed their mind. They saw us androids. They saw Adam. And Eve.
They saw how we lived, considered the meaning of existence, and came to a different conclusion.

This tower doesn’t fire artillery. It fires an ark.
An ark containing memories of the foolish machine lifeforms.
An ark that sends those memories to a new world.

Perhaps they’ll never reach that world.
Perhaps they’ll simply wander an empty sky for eternity.
It’s all the same to the girls. For them, time is without end.

Adam and Eve are inside the ark. Eve is asleep.
Adam holds him in a gentle embrace.
He seems to be smiling at me.

I try to look up at him, but my body refuses to move.
Looks like the damage has spread to my motor functions as well.

“Will you come with us?” asks Adam.

The question was completely free of malice.
It seemed I no longer had a reason to hate machines.
Maybe I never had a reason in the first place.

What have I been fighting for? Who have I been living for?

I don’t know anymore.

I try to speak my mind, but the words don’t come out right.
My thought routines are losing cohesion. I don’t... I can’t
remember my name.

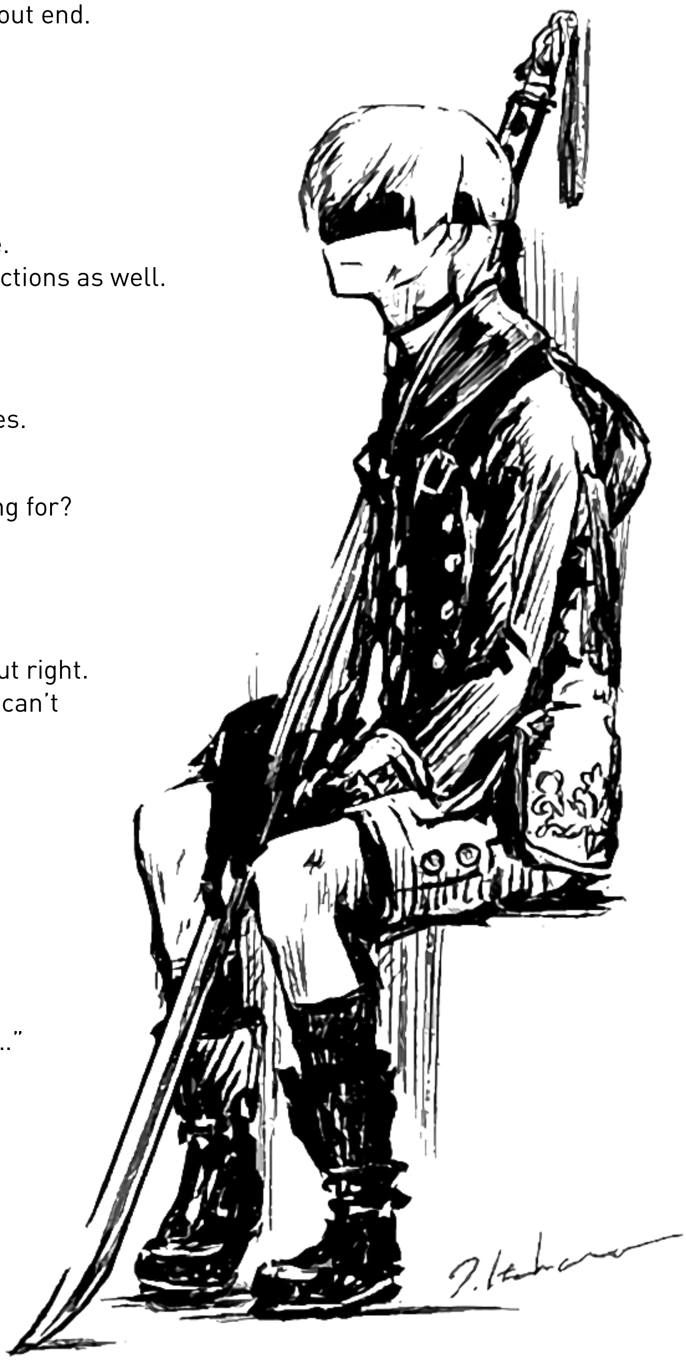
“I’m...”

Mustering all my strength, I force out the words...

“I’ll stay.”

“I...”

“We YoRHa...
We don’t deserve to be loved by this world...”



MACHINE RESEARCH REPORT:

<u>Overview</u>

While the machine lifeform network was destroyed following the collapse of the Tower, a great deal of previously unknown information regarding machine lifeforms and aliens was recovered from the wreckage. As part of this analysis, we compiled research and conjecture regarding both the machine lifeform network and the lifeform Codename N2—commonly known as the Red Girls—that was thought to have been commanding them.

- Machine lifeforms are weapons created by the aliens. The only command given for their behavior was to "defeat the enemy." However, it appears that their capacity for growth and evolution went too far, and they eventually turned on and killed their creators.
- At this point, machine lifeforms recognized that the goal of "defeating the enemy" actually REQUIRED an enemy. In order to maintain this singular objective, they reached the contradictory conclusion that their current enemies—the androids—could not be annihilated completely, lest they no longer have an enemy to defeat.
- In order to resolve this inherent contradiction, the machine lifeforms began to intentionally cause deficiencies in their network, diversifying the vectors of evolution for all machines. This is the cause behind some of the more "special" machine lifeforms, such as Pascal and the Forest King.
- Meanwhile, the deficient network began repeating a process of self-repair while incorporating surrounding information, until it finally reached a fixed state as a new form of network. Traces of information regarding human memories from the quantum server of the old model were discovered, indicating that it had integrated them during the final stages of its growth process. Said server contained a record of the discarded "Project Gestalt," as well as information on the human who was the first successful example of the Gestalt process.
- Having acquired information regarding humanity, the network's structure changed once more, becoming what might better be called a meta-network (or a "concept", to borrow the words of the machines). This led directly to the formation of the ego we identify as N2.

...So then! To sum up: For hundreds of years, we've been fighting a network of machines with the ghost of humanity at its core. We've been living in a stupid *****ing world where we fight an endless war that we COULDN'T POSSIBLY LOOSE, all for the sake of some Council of Humanity on the moon that doesn't even exist.

I don't know what the point is to all this, but I swear I will kill every evolutionary dead-end machine lifeform, as well as every single asshole behind Project YoRHa.

I'm coming for all your heads. ***** you.

Information Analysis Officer,
Jackass

YOKO FACT 26 – From The Ark Wiki – Unofficial Lore FAQ section (https://theark.wiki/w/Lore_FAQ)

At which point in the game 9S learned the truth about 2E?

A2's rhetorical question during the finale of Route C as well as 9S' reaction to it clearly indicates that 9S had already long known by that point who and what 2B really was. However, the exact moment he figures out her true nature is ambiguous.

Even though to him they had only just met in the Bunker, 9S already begins to question why they had paired him with a combat model like 2B if all command had wanted was intel. 2B however quickly dismisses the question, stating "Orders are orders".

9S is an extremely clever android, and if this iteration was anything like his past selves, it is most likely that 9S realizes at some point during Route A / B that 2B is there to monitor him. This tenacity to learn about 2B's intended purpose is shown several times in A Repeating Prayer.

The warning from 21O at the end of YoRHa Betrayers side quest also likely alerts 9S to the fact that should he misstep, he will be treated just like 8B's squad.

It is most likely that 9S figures out that 2B is there to monitor him during Route A / B, it isn't until the Amnesia side quest that he learns E types even exist. It is some time after this point, he puts two and two together, realizing 2B is in fact an executioner model herself, 2E.

Why Pascal didn't teach his kids to be scared of death?

For the same reason Adam wanted to die: because Pascal didn't understand death either. Machines essentially never die, and thus have no fear of death. Pascal couldn't teach an emotion that he didn't have. It wasn't until the incident actually happened to people so close to him that he finally understood what it felt like. As a side note, androids fear death because they are based on humanity, who carried this fear, and are thus programmed to follow suit.

What is canonical?

For Pascal, his memories are erased by A2's Pod (according to A Long Story). She knew the pain of losing her comrades and living with memories of them.

Ending D, leading to Ending E, seems to be the canon ending. "Farewell's" outcome depends on 9S' choice between going inside the Ark or not. A choice that can only be made in Ending D.

So, lastly, did 9S went inside the Ark? Well, both are acceptable for now, since no side-materials have approved or contradicted one over the other.

When 2B got infected?

She got infected by fighting the corrupted flights units after saving 9S. In the epilogue, pod 042 recalls 2B's air fight, and states: Even though she had planned to eject herself from the flight unit right before crashing, her body still sustained a large amount of damage, and contamination from the logic virus was severe.

When did 9S get corrupted in Route C?

In the game and in A Long Story, 9S got visibly corrupted only after attaching 2B's infected arm in the Tower. However, in Precious Things as well as in a Strategy Guide / Game Chapters Comments, it is mentioned that 9S got corrupted before 2B clone fight. Since the virus was corroding his memories and taking them away, Soul Box is the most obvious place where it happened.

So there is no clear answer here.

How 9S was able to defeat all those 2B clones?

The 2B models 9S was fighting were, in fact, nowhere close to the real thing in strength and ability. 9S even describes taking them down as "easy" and spends a pretty short time destroying them all. To begin with, they aren't YoRHa models—they're empty dolls that were made by the machines, presumably using the materials from the transfer devices.

Did 2B know the truth about humanity?

No. During her fight with Adam, she did hear about it when he said "But you realize it too, right? That humanity is already extinct?", but she was so against the idea that she even told herself that there was no need for her to think about such a thing. Her immediate reaction was to tell Adam to shut up, then to tell her pod to shut up, and then to stab Adam to death for bringing it up (her thoughts the entire time after this revelation had nothing to do with 9S).

Does 9S hate 2B? And A2?

No. That said, he does hold some seriously possessive feelings towards her—ones that he's implied to know he has (due to a line saying "his wicked feelings were peeked into [by Adam]"). Before he went totally batshit however he was still thinking about things like what if he had a chance to buy 2B a T-Shirt. Any acts of violence he does towards her clones in the game are a result of possessiveness and not hatred.

However, 9S truly hates A2, because she killed 2B. He knew that 2B was infected. In the game, 2B looks at 9S with normal eyes even though she looked at A2 with bright red eyes mere moments ago. This was probably made for a more dramatic effect. 9S wasn't stupid and understood what happened - thus never in the route C 2B's infection was mentioned even once despite Pods constantly exchanging information with each other.

Near the end of Route C, 9S motives became even more twisted since his obsession with 2B reached extreme levels coupled with the virus infection and a complete mental breakdown. Also, he realizes that he and 2B have probably fought against A2 in the past. Meaning that A2 would know more about 2B than him. He begins to fill with jealousy. Anyone and everything that knows more about 2B should just disappear.

Why the machines created Adam?

Because they were getting their asses kicked too hard, which is why "this cannot continue" was the catchphrase. They thought that in order to win against the androids, creating a human being—the creator of androids—was the way to go. But since there are so many humans, who should base their creation from? After searching through the network, their answer was "Adam"; the first human being created by God. Adam was made in imitation of God.

Except he also got his ass whooped. As he lay there, unable to move, he searched on the network what he could do to protect himself. The answer was "Eve"; like how the machines created him from the name "Adam", he thought he should create another him in the same way. 'Thought', because he can't remember actually doing it.

"You're thinking about how much you want to **** 2B, aren't you?"

There is no definitive answer on the meaning behind those stars. In English, the words "fuck" and "kill" could fit. In Japanese, obvious fitting words could be kill/destroy, or rape/violate. But hundreds of words could be used. This could also be censoring.

9S might already be aware of 2B real identity at this point in the story, but nonetheless, kill seems a bit out of place. In conclusion, the word is intentionally hidden and no one knows for sure its meaning.

Ciphered Story 2

Translation by D1g1al

A short story about Pods going fishing after Ending E.
This text was originally encrypted in Hexadecimal and in Japanese.

Pod 042	Question: Explain the action currently being performed?
Pod 153	Answer: I am currently “fishing”. Proposal: Suspend this spoken conversation. Reason: The fish are escaping.
Pod 042	Negative: With respect to your fishing, here are some fish sightings so it does not pose a problem. Question: What is the reason that you are dumping the fish you caught to the ground, one after another? Conjecture: It appears to be a waste of energy and resources.
Pod 153	Report: Because this is for the sake of accomplishing a goal that I have set upon myself, I continue to fish. Therefore, it is my feeling that this behavior is not a waste. Hope: It is my desire that this sentiment can be shared by you.
Pod 042	Proposal: Share the aforementioned “goal”. If this is done, it is possible we can share this sentiment.
Pod 153	Report: It is to exterminate all mackerel from the surface of the Earth.
Pod 042	Question: ... Mackerel?
Pod 153	Affirmation: Yes, exactly. If I continue to fish and fish and fish for mackerel, it is not entirely impossible that I might exterminate mackerel from this part of the ocean.
Pod 042	Question: ...Why mackerel?
Pod 153	In the event that an android ingests a mackerel, a fatal toxic reaction is the result. When I process the consequences of a situation where “it should happen that 9S unfortunately consumes a mackerel”, a malfunction is detected in my internal algorithms. Therefore, for the purpose of the reduction of the risk of 9S consuming a mackerel by even 0.0001%, I am determined to continue fishing mackerel.
Pod 042	Conjecture: ... That ... kind of behavior is referred to as “overprotective”.
Pod 153	What you are saying is of no concern to me. I will exterminate the mackerel. The time when repairs are complete for 9S ... as well as 2B and A2 is near. Until then, I will continue to implement the extermination of the mackerel. To repeat myself, I desire you to cease this spoken conversation. I am completely unable to proceed with fishing.
Pod 042	Proposal: In that case, I, too ... I predict that fishing together will accomplish your goal at twice the speed.
Pod 153	... my gratitude to you.
Pod 042	No gratitude is necessary. The time ... is soon, isn’t it?
Pod 153	Yes, it's soon now... We must definitely practice. “Good morning!” “Good Morning!”
Pod 042	“Good morning!” “Good Morning!”

NieR Music Concert: Farewell

Translation by /u/ilfans

> A short Story about that takes place roughly a month after Ending E.
> The Pods are finally ready to wake up our androids...

Scene 1: September 5th

Pod 153 (narration):
Everything that lives is designed to end.
"We" are perpetually trapped ...
... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.
Is this a curse? Or some kind of punishment?
I often think about the god who blessed us with this cryptic puzzle ...
... and wonder if "we'll" ever have the chance to kill him.

Pod 042 : Unit 2B's vital signs confirmed. Memory storage, thought circuits, auxiliary motor functions, all confirmed to have been restarted.
Entering reboot sequence.

2B: Ugh ...

Pod 042: Good morning, 2B.

2B: I ...

Pod 042: Report: Unit 2B was killed by unit A2 approximately 1718 hours ago.

2B: 1718 hours ago ... So ... 72 days, then.

Pod 042: Following that, us tactical support units reconstructed your parts.
The virus previously inside you deactivated along with the tower's collapse, and remains in suspension.

2B: Tower ...? What happened ...?

(2B suddenly realizes something.)

2B: Ah!! 9S ...!!

Pod 153: Report: Unit 9S ceased activity approximately 740 hours ago.

2B: Pod ... 153?

Pod 153: Unit 9S was severely contaminated, however said virus deactivated along with the tower's collapse, and remains in suspension.

2B: So he's just ... asleep?

Pod 153: Negative: An error occurred during unit 9S's reboot sequence.

2B: What do you mean, an error ...?

Pod 153: Unknown: All checks were completed, however his personal data will not begin loading procedures, causing an inability to reboot.

2B: His personal data won't load ...
Then in that case, run the monitoring sequence, and skip the check sequence ...

Pod 153:	Negative: This unit has already attempted 345 combinations 34,500 times, and all have ended in failure. Unit 9S's current state suggests there is a possibility his personal data has been lost due to some unknown cause.
2B:	His personal data is ... lost ...?
Pod 153:	Proposal: Unit 2B should consider disposing of unit 9S's body.
2B:	(2B speaks in a strong tone.) There's no way I could ... just dispose of his body ...! (There is a considerable pause.)
Pod 153:	... Understood.
2B (narration):	After being reconstructed, there wasn't even a hint of dirt on 9S's body ... His face ... looked just like he was sleeping. I took my weapon in hand, and packed the minimum necessary provisions, before standing up. I had to go. There had to be a way to get 9S to reboot properly. That's what I believed.

Scene 2: September 14th

2B (narration):	I received information on what happened while I was gone from the pods. About A2 ... and 9S. I also heard about how the two of them destroyed some huge "Tower" that had been created by the machine lifeforms. The rubble from it is still scattered all throughout the city. The City Ruins' landscape had been completely changed.
Pod 042:	Proposal: Unit 2B should gather information at the Resistance camp.
2B (narration):	The Resistance camp was able to miraculously avoid damage from the collapse of the tower ... However Devola and Popola, and a few others in the Resistance, lost their lives in the fight with the machines. Even though Anemone was faced with such a difficult situation, she still remained level-headed. I tried speaking to Anemone about the situation with 9S's rebooting, but she wasn't able to provide me with any helpful information.
Pod 153:	Report: Relevant records within the Bunker have been lost.
2B (narration):	We YoRHa units are a special type. We contain something other androids don't within us — a black box. And due to that, we're capable of much higher functionality. However, unlike general androids, our maintenance is only able to be done on the Bunker. It's possible to make easy repairs with the small amount of materials and programs at access points, but detailed information about the insides of our bodies was lost along with the fall of the Bunker. Even so, I was traveling from place to place looking for the information I needed. No matter ... how long it took.
Pod 042:	Alert: Unit 2B is taking damage due to maintenance failure. Proposal: Unit 2B should perform proper repair and replenish materials.
2B (narration):	With how tired I was, even doing simple first aid felt troublesome. In the depths of my heart, I started to feel like ... everything I was doing was meaningless.

	I don't ... care anymore. I wonder if ... 9S will ever wake up. That sort of dark thought process began to take over. And I shook my head. I couldn't give up. I couldn't give up. I couldn't give up. Even if I was just deceiving myself, I couldn't admit that. It caused my body to become heavy. If I go further away from here, I may be able to find surviving YoRHa members.
Pod 153:	Report: Mail notification received.
2B:	... Check it.
	(The pod reads out the mail's contents in its usual tone of voice.)
Pod 153:	Sender: Jackass. Subject: About 9S's Personal Data Reboot. Yo, how's it going, 2B? I know a little something about 9S's condition. I've been looking into a lot of things since everything happened, and I came across some concerning information. There were some logs remaining in the access port outside of 9S's memory storage. They were a communication record from the "Ark" object those machine lifeforms made. I don't know anything about that "Ark" thing, but it might be some sort of server. I'll send you the time and coordinates that were written in that log right away. There might be a hint somewhere in them.
	(There's a short pause.)
Pod 153:	This concludes the body of the email. Time and three-dimensional coordinate data are attached.
2B (narration):	Those coordinates ... were right in the area where the Tower collapsed.

Scene 3: September 17th

2B (narration):	Mountains and mountains of white rubble, as far as I could see. I'd arrived at the center of where the Tower collapsed. And it was there, where I began digging.
Pod 153:	Hypothesis: Origin point is 40 meters below the current point.
Pod 042:	Proposal: Search for a more efficient method for digging.
2B (narration):	That's right, the coordinates Jackass sent me pointed right to a location within the Tower's rubble. I was digging through it so I could reach the position she gave me. But the material was much more firm than I expected it to be, and my digging wasn't going particularly well. My breath began to show, and before I'd realized it, it was snowing.

It seems the Tower's rubble was absorbing the surrounding area's heat and causing the area to cool.

According to the pods, it was made of materials derived from the bodies of machine lifeforms, which centered around silicon, among other things.

But that didn't matter. I only cared about my digging.

Pod 153: Hypothesis: Origin point is 25 meters below the current point.

Pod 042: Alert: Unit 2B is taking damage due to maintenance failure.

2B (narration): The Tower's materials became increasingly firm the further down I went.

I was using my weapon to dig, but I had to stop using my one-handed sword to switch to something better suited, and I proceeded downward by practically crushing the materials.

I continued on, my mind devoid of any other thoughts, until I finished. I could feel an ache run through my pain sensors. But it was only thanks to that pain that I was able to keep my sanity.

Pod 153: Hypothesis: Origin point is 12 meters below the current point.

Pod 042: Alert: Unit 2B is taking damage due to maintenance failure.
Alert: If no proper repair is performed,
it will cause severe impact to the unit's body.

2B (narration): As I continued to dig, I found out what that "Ark" really was.
It seemed to be a huge memory unit, made by combining complex crystals.
However, as it'd been shattered to pieces, I couldn't find a single "living" crystal.

Regardless, I continued digging in search of the Ark's crystals.

With each swing of my weapon, blood began to scatter. I couldn't feel my fingertips anymore, and the sensors running from my wrists had died. The bolts I'd used to forcibly fix it were starting to dig into my skin.

But that didn't matter. Somewhere up ahead, the information I needed to save 9S was ... Even if only a little remains of the Ark, I ... I have to ...!!

(An error sound pings.)

Pod 042: Alert: Unit 2B entered forced shutdown due to overload.

Scene 4: September 19th

Pod 042: Emergency nanomachine removal complete.
Unit 2B's vital signs confirmed.
Entering reboot sequence.

(A long "beeeeep" alert sounds. Afterward, a short three "beeps" sound.)

Pod 042: Good morning, 2B.

2B: Huh? I ...

Pod 042: You entered a forced shutdown due to severe continuous operation.

2B (narration): When I hurriedly asked about the Ark, the pods showed me a small, orange sparkling crystal. What they found seemed to be a remnant of the machine lifeforms' communication protocol.

If we use that protocol and its data, we could create a key, and open up 9S's memory storage. Although I didn't understand the details, there was meaning in my continued digging.

The pods siphoned out the data and recombined it to create a repair vaccine. Then, we could pull the cable from 9S's access port and create a wired connection.

With that, I'd be able to insert the repair vaccine. After that, all I'd have to do is hope that 9S's memory storage data could be evacuated into his personal data.

Pod 153: Repair vaccine injected.

(Three seconds later, the sound of a heartbeat stops and a flatline beeps.)

Pod 153: No effect. Re-administering repair vaccine.

(Three seconds later, the sound of a heartbeat stops and a flatline beeps.)

Pod 153: No effect. Re-administering repair vaccine.

(Three seconds later, the sound of a heartbeat stops and a flatline beeps.)

Pod 153: No effect.

2B: Why ... Why isn't it ...?!

Pod 042: Hypothesis: Repair vaccine is a failure.

Pod 153: Negative: Repair vaccine's functions confirmed to be normal.

2B: Try it again ... Administer it to him again!

(Three seconds later, the sound of a heartbeat stops and a flatline beeps.)

Pod 153: No effect.

2B: Try ... again ...

Pod 153: Report: Traces detected indicating the memory region of unit 9S's contents has been erased.

Pod 042: Negative: It is an effect of the repair vaccine.
Hypothesis: Unit 9S's personal data has been lost.

2B: His personal data ... is lost ...?

Pod 042: His personal data was wiped of his own accord, but there is the possibility it was moved to a different location. According to unit A2's records, it is possible his data evacuated using the machine lifeforms' Ark.

Pod 042: Report: Possibility of recovering 9S's personal data extremely low.

2B: No ...

(Three beeps suddenly sound.)

Pod 153: Report: Memory components discovered within traces of personal data.

Partial playback is possible of memory containing the reason behind his personal data's reparation failure.

Query: Does unit 2B feel it necessary to repair this memory component?

2B: ... Repair it.

Pod 153: Understood.

Data repair complete.
Starting playback.

(9S's voice begins to playback with the sound quality of a radio.
He seems to be suffering.)

9S: I didn't ... get on the Ark created by the machine lifeforms.

We YoRHa ... We don't deserve to be loved by this world ... We're just soldiers created to die ... But I ... I think I'm glad ... that I was born as myself ...

My personal data, it ... it can't keep it's shape any longer.
I wonder if I'm about to disappear ...
But ... I'm okay with that ...

(2B begins crying, without making a sound.)

9S: Hey, 2B ... We're ... we're not immortal or anything.
Someday, we'll break down and return to the Earth.

But, my existence ... It wasn't meaningless ...
Meeting you ... gave meaning to my birth ...
Thank you ...

Thank you ...

(9S's voice becomes hidden behind static.)

2B: (2B begins weeping.) Nines ...

Pod 042 (narration): 2B didn't move from where she was.
She remained there, unmoving ... forever.
It was a completely irrational act.
However, "we" can now understand the reason behind it.
Why it was that 2B didn't move.
Why it was that she didn't speak.
Because "we" are now in that same place, feeling the same thing.

(There is a small pause.)

Pod 153 (narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
"They" are perpetually trapped ...
... in a never-ending spiral of life and death.
However ... life is all about the struggle within this cycle.
That is what "we" believe.

This is how the original script book for the recital ended. It was given to people attending the concert as a bonus for ordering tickets from Square Enix E-Store, and therefore, is extremely rare. Because the book was given to people starting from the first Osaka concert and it contained scripts for not yet performed recital dramas, there was a certain hype related to it being leaked.

However, what is surprising is that this final recital, Farewell, was performed differently during the actual concert. Where the original script tells the events after 9S refused to board inside the ark, the following script tells a different story, where the antidote is able to revive 9S.

2B: No, 9S, this can't ...
We didn't even get to say goodbye, and yet ... why ... why am I the only one ...!

(Three beeps sound out.)

Pod 042: Abnormal signal detected from black box.

2B: I don't care anymore! I don't ...!

Pod 042: Alert: Strange vibrations emanating from black box. Temperature rising.

Alert: Errors detected in unit's functionality. FFCS offline. NFCS offline. Initiating short-range radio-wave camouflage.

Unit 2B's vital signs are deteriorating.
Alert: Immense damage to unit 2B's life preservation functionality.

Proposal: Body adjustment and maintenance in a safe location urgently required.

Pod 153: Report: Abnormal vibrations detected from black box. Temperature rising.

Pod 042: This unit has already reported on the abnormal situation.

Pod 153: Negative: The vibrations are not originating from unit 2B, but instead from unit 9S.

Pod 042: Negative: Unit 9S's personal data has already been terminated.
Reboot is realistically impossible.

(Warning beeps begin to chime out. A heartbeat can be heard.)

9S: Nnngh ...

2B: N-Nine ...s ...

Where ... am I ...? 2B, what did I ...?

2B: (2B speaks through tears.) I'm so glad ... I'm so glad you're ...

Pod 153 (narration): It is still unknown what happened that day. It is possible that 9S's black box had retrieved his memory's personal data. At any rate, it may have been affected by some alien technology yet unknown to us.

Pod 042 (narration): Everything that lives is designed to end.
"They" are perpetually trapped ...
However, we cannot give in.

9S (narration): Even if this world is full of curses. Even if this world punishes us.

2B (narration): We continue to resist everything within that spiral.

2B and 9S (narration): While singing words of prayer.

YOKO FACT 27 – Interviews from the Famitsu Weekly NieR Automata Special Feature (translated by /u/ymiaw)

https://theark.wiki/w/Famitsu_Weekly_NieR_Automata_Special_Feature

Interview with the Japanese voice actress for 2B: Ishikawa Yui



What kind of character do you think 2B is?

A serious and diligent one. Due to this she feels that she can't go against her mission, which collides with her actual emotions and causes her many hardships. When I first read her lines, even while knowing that she was an android, I felt from her words and actions that she had feelings. The line "emotions are prohibited" is said because emotions exist, right? Maybe she was actually cold in the beginning, but I think that from spending time with 9S over and over again her personality gradually changed. That's why I think that she is a character burdened with suffering and grief from her painful destiny.

Any specific points you took care in performing as 2B with?

To be honest, I didn't have the whole picture when I was recording, so around half the time I just left it up to Yoko-san's direction.

It does indeed sound hard to grasp the whole picture when there are multiple endings.
What was Yoko-san's direction like?

Whenever I play a cool (calm and collected) character, I always wonder how much emotion I should use. For 2B's lines, despite her usual coldness, there were quite a lot of scenes where she became emotional, so I would read them with emotion. Many times I would be told things like "You don't have to put that much emotion into it" and "2B is strong, so you don't have to show her weakness".

This was your first time working with Yoko-san, but what was your impression of him when you first met?

My first impression was that he had a very polite way of speaking and was a very nice person despite his rough appearance. But when I saw his works, I thought he had a deep sense of darkness... *laugh*. He'd made so many games with a profoundly solemn world view which was hard to connect to my impression of him, and it surprised me.

I heard that you are pretty engrossed with the game.

Probably not as much in comparison to the other voice actors, but I did clear ending E. I had so much fun I even forgot that my own voice was coming from the screen. All the characters were so interesting and burdened with heavy fates, and the story they unfolded was also spectacular. It's a game that allows you to personally experience its deepness, so it makes me want to keep on playing. I felt like I was able to finally understand everything about 2B through playing the game.

The contents of the concert reading had become quite a topic within the fans.

That's right. I heard about the change in the 5th script (Farewell) only right before the performance day. Hanae Natsuki's (9S's) part was also to be a recording as he was planned not to perform that night. Three days before that however he was suddenly able to come. The moment I heard this, I went "Ooh—!" (This is a sound of happy surprise/expectation)

Fans who were watching the concert on Nico Live were surprised at the sudden story change and sat in anticipation.

They were deceived in a good way. I've never heard of putting surprises inside script readings, so it was something very NieR-like as a game full of surprises. As expected [of Yoko Taro], I thought. I wondered how the audience would take the surprise that we ourselves had been given, and anticipated the reaction while tackling the reading.

Did you feel any pressure to be reading in front of a large crowd?

As my voice was the only thing heard inside the quiet venue, my nervousness was high. But even though I was the one standing on stage, people came to hear 2B, so as to not destroy her image (and due to my nervousness) I used all the strength in my body to keep my posture. Then I had muscle pain the next day.

Since it's been about a year since the recording for the game had been done, did you feel any unease in performing 2B again?

I had been playing the game and hearing her voice during that time, so I never forgot what it felt like. On the contrary, due to playing the game so much, I was able to notice things I hadn't noticed during the initial recording, so there was no sense of uneasiness to play as her again during the concert readings.

How was the reaction of the audience?

Most were delighted at the entrance of Hanae-kun. While everyone tried to be quiet during the readings, the moment Hanae-kun came on stage they conveyed such a devouring sense of passion. I myself enjoyed that reaction, and combined with the contents of the script I was deeply moved.

After the readings had ended, the venue announcements that you were in charge of also became quite a topic. I heard that 2B calling 9S "Nines" was your ad-lib.

Before the concluding program, Yoko-san told me that the preface and afterword was parallel to the actual contents. Based on that and the flow of the reading, I accidentally said "Nines".

That ad-lib seemed to have shot through the hearts of many. Your co-stars also gave it high praise.

Apparently the word "Nines" was trending on Twitter on that day *laughs* I felt bad that I had accidentally changed the contents of what the creator of these characters wrote, but Yoko-san and related staff told me that it was actually better that way. I'm glad that everyone enjoyed it, and even now, I think that those were 2B's true feelings at that time.

Interview with the Japanese voice actor for 9S: Hanae Natsuki



Hanae: In the game, why can't hacking boxes be opened when playing as 2B even when 9S is right there?

Yoko: That's...because 9S keeps getting distracted.

It's been four months since the release of the game, but what are your feelings right now?

I've been asked about my feelings towards published works a lot, but never as much as I've been asked about NieR:Automata.
Every time I go to work, fellow coworkers tell me "I played NieR" and such. Acquaintances also send me their thoughts through LINE *laughs* It makes me reaffirm the idea that this is such an amazing game, and since 9S was the first main character I'd voiced that starred in a home console game, I've had feelings well up in my chest sometimes.

You've been a fan of Yoko's works since Drakengard, but what is it that you like about them?

I was in elementary school when I first played Drakengard, and at that time I didn't really think deeply about it. I bought it because I thought it seemed to be interesting like "Dynasty Warriors", but there was so much blood and it was so realistic so I thought I'd accidentally bought a scary game. And when I played it, all the characters including the main one had such a surprising personality, which I thought

was kind of cool. It was also interesting how every weapon had a story attached to it. I was the kind of guy that liked niche titles more than major ones, so I got addicted to Drakengard. I had a large interest in Angelus, the red dragon, and was charmed by the relationship between her and Caim.

And after that, NieR was released.

At that time I had no idea that Drakengard and NieR were related. It was only when I played 9S' story that I looked up "NieR Replicant/Gestalt" on the Internet and realized that it was related to Drakengard. Then, I played NieR Replicant.

How did you feel about Replicant?

It was super interesting. The world view and atmosphere were amazing, and together with things like the setting which can only be experienced in this piece of work, I received an impact like I had watched an epic movie. And when I told Yoko-san and Saitou-san and I was playing it, they told me that they wanted me to play from the second route all the way to the end in one go. And when I did so, I received an even bigger impact. More than just things being different from what I imagined they would be, it just made me feel sad.

What about Drakengard 3, which was released after NieR?

I played it. It went in a surprising and completely different direction than 1 and 2. Despite there being so many cute characters, the succession of dirty jokes overwhelmed me haha. But things like fighting together with your dragon and bonds between characters were very Drakengard-like and were great.

You are pretty engrossed with the game (NieR:Automata), right?

Yes. I erased my data three times, and in some of those playthroughs I had 100% completion, so I can't even calculate the amount of time I'd spent playing *bitter laugh*. By the way, I'm playing through the PC version now. The momentum of this PC version is pretty amazing. It's always been at the top of the rankings in Japan.

You really have played it a lot *laughs*. Why are you addicted to that extent?

The action just felt good. Even though I'm just pressing buttons, I can do stylish attacks and never felt lame during movement and attacking. And of course, the story is also great. The bonds shown between 2B and 9S and how they try to find their purpose as androids while 2B lies about her true self were very saddening and impressive to me.

So, it was better than you expected?

That's right. There were quite a lot of developments that betrayed my expectations, and after playing the demo I didn't expect there to be so many shooting sections haha. I didn't know about hacking, and I did want to win, but it was challenging. There were many surprises like the ones in the Forest of Myth from the first game.

NieR has a unique kind of misery to it, doesn't it?

Yeah. Enemies each had their own stories and the music really fit them. There were many scenes I cried at just due to the music.

Please give us some impressions about 9S.

At first, I thought he was just a cheeky character than hated machines. While he had always had an abundance of emotions, being together with 2B had given him human-like qualities. But he's a poor guy, I think. After 2B died, he fought alone, and as the story progressed his emotions went wild. Those scenes were my personal favorite.

During your playthrough, did you feel like 9S had an ambiance similar to Drakengard characters?

In cutscenes that 2B was in a lot, 9S would grin, and his resemblance to Caim then gave me the chills. Aside from that, another scene where 9S left an impression on me was the exchange with Adam ("You're thinking about how you want to **** 2B, aren't you?"). When I read that, I realized "9S was this kind of person?". I came across that kind of scene a lot. And, after the concert readings, the strategy guide and the novel, my impression of 9S changed. The more I know about him, the more I think "I should have done this scene that way" and such.

Which one of his lines left an impression on you?

The scene with a lot of 2B's memories where he said "This is my treasure!" left an impression on me. Not only was it was painful to form it into words, but the scene after that where he kept on stabbing 2B made me sad acting it out.

9S yelled quite a lot in the latter half of the game. Was that hard for your stamina?

It was very hard. The first parts we recorded were the cutscene parts, and he yelled quite a lot inside cutscenes *laughs*. And, in the scene where he was dying after getting stabbed by A2, I feel like I'd screamed enough for a lifetime haha. So to be honest, when I was first reading the script, I was uneasy, wondering if it was going to get interesting. I knew the basic story but wasn't sure about it as a whole. 2B seemed to die way too quickly, and 9S seemed to get angry way too hastily—I was wondering if this was going to become a proper game. But according to people who had been involved in recording for the previous game, the previous recording was done in the same way; you don't really get a lot of feedback during the recording, but when you actually play the game it'll be interesting.

How did you find hacking to be?

I didn't know about lock-on until halfway through the game haha. It was fun after I found out though.

Can you tell us about your favorite sub-quests and weapons?

I laughed a lot in the lost sister subquest. The "Please tell me how to make childreeeeeeennn" line was really cute. Quests relating to the first game also brought tears to my eyes. As for a weapon that I like, in the first game I had always been using the Phoenix Dagger, so when I found it buried in the desert, I got really excited *laughs*. While I liked new weapons too, when playing as 9S the spear throwing motion was really strong, so I mainly stuck with the Phoenix Dagger.

The way you get the Cypress Stick is pretty special, right? It's even called 'The Hanae Method'.

Since you float upwards for just a moment when you use "Mirage", and since that was the first pod skill I bought, I thought I'd try to use it to get to various places. There was a treasure box at a high place inside the forest kingdom, so I thought I'd do some air attacks and use mirage—and I ended up reaching the box. It was actually pretty easy, you know? Just do a jump attack, then Mirage, then another jump and you're there.

Let's talk about the concert. The script change caused a lot of surprises. Were you aware of it from the beginning?

I also had no idea until pretty much right before the readings. Moreover, I hadn't been planning to participate in the last program at all. But since I was suddenly able to go, I was able to get some new lines from Yoko-san.

And finally, what would you want from new works from Yoko-san?

I'd like to play a game with the same world view as Drakengard and NieR, or something in a different timeline, or even a derivative of that. Please think about it, Yoko-san!

Interview with the NieR:Automata's director: Yoko Taro

How does an android's skin feel?

Very soft and warm.

Why do androids have a concept of leveling up?

Because this game is an RPG.

The timing of the machine lifeforms' attack on the bunker via the backdoor just seems too perfect. Are the androids and machine lifeforms conspiring with each other?

This has been shown in the stage play YoRHa, but the machine lifeforms have always been coming through the backdoor. However, the androids and machine lifeforms are not in cahoots with each other. There were mainly two reasons the virus spread through the bunker so quickly. One, since YoRHa launched an all-out attack on the machine lifeforms, they were deemed a threat, and two, the red girls just felt like it.

Is there any reason the YoRHa member's outfits are based on the Gothic Lolita style?

The world of NieR:Automata is way into the future, where things like appearances and sizes have lost their meaning (just because you stand out doesn't mean you're strong). Though there were multiple choices for the YoRHa's costumes, the individual who came up with project YoRHa chose the color black for a particular reason.

So, permission to use flight units is rarely granted, but how many flight units are stored in the bunker?

16 of them. At the beginning of route C, you see more than 16 flight units in the all-out attack, but that's because they include units from orbital bases other than the bunker.

Does every YoRHa unit have their own rooms? How many rooms are there in the bunker?

The bunker has around 100 rooms. In general, each unit has their own room, but sometimes units share connected rooms.

Why did the berserk machine lifeforms start attacking the Resistance camp?

They didn't really go berserk – it would be more accurate to say that their restrictions were lifted and they returned to their original function. Their previous passive behavior is the irregularity, since the basic function of machine lifeforms is to attack androids.

Was the tower created in an instant? Or was it created bit by bit, hidden away underground? Also, does the tower have anything to do with the giant tree from the previous NieR?

Like the copied city, the tower was created underground by the machine lifeforms in a gradual process. The machine lifeforms extracted data from the previous NieR's giant tree, so I guess in that sense the tower and giant tree are related, but it doesn't mean that the tower IS the giant tree.

What is it that was launched by the tower at the end? Is it a rocket?

That is the ark that the machine lifeforms launched towards the future. I guess you can call it a rocket in the sense that it uses propulsion to escape the Earth's atmosphere. The contents of the ark differ depending on the route. In ending C, it's empty (since all the machine lifeforms' data that were supposed to be on there was destroyed), and in ending D it contains the data of machine lifeforms including Adam and the red girls.

Why did Adam talk to 9S in the end, even though Adam was destroyed?

Due to 9S's repeated hacking and him fusing with the machine network at one point, traces of Adam were intermingled with 9S's own memories and took such a form.

What kind of memories did 2B leave on her sword before she was slain by A2? Do the weapons even come with that sort of system?

What 2B left behind was what she'd like A2 to do, which includes protecting 9S. It is possible to store memories on the weapons, though the amount of storage is limited.

What kind of feelings did 9S harbor towards 2B?

No comment.

Who made the recovery units, and for what purpose?

The machine lifeforms wanted to launch a large amount of data (mainly the personality data of various machine lifeforms) into outer space along with the ark.
The recovery units were created to gather such data.

The machine lifeforms absorbed the memory data of 'a certain human' that was stored on the old servers, and the red girls (N2) were born as a result of that. Who is this 'certain human'?

No comment.

Why did the aliens attack the Earth? And why did they just let themselves be killed by the machine?

The aliens attacked in order to inhabit Earth. They were wiped out by the machine lifeforms simply because the machine lifeforms evolved to surpass the aliens.

Androids and machine lifeforms who go berserk have their eyes turn red; does this have anything to do with the Red Eye?

If I have to pick a side, it'd be yes.

Multiple machine lifeforms formed a cocoon from which Adam was born – how does that work, exactly?

Multiple machine lifeforms fused to become a temporary factory, and gave birth to Adam from that. Since they used drastically different materials when creating Adam, Adam looks like a regular human, but the fact that he has a core means that he's still a machine lifeform.

Why is it that only Adam can grow (level up)?

It's not just limited to Adam – all machine lifeforms can learn and grow. Adam was born as a completely blank slate, so he evolved quite rapidly thanks to 2B and 9S's attacks.

When Eve is overwhelmed by his emotions, the markings on his left arm start to enlarge – what's up with that? Is it related to the black scrawl? And why is it that only Eve has those markings?

He has those markings to imitate humans, based on what's recorded in humanity's past information. Adam told him to get those markings, and to Eve, those markings are like a keepsake from his brother, so he tried very hard to keep those markings, but when he goes berserk, he couldn't maintain the shape of those markings anymore.

Why did A2 kill the forest king right after her sudden appearance?

A2's goal is to destroy machine lifeforms, so she decided to destroy the forest king after hearing that the ruler of the forest was a machine lifeform. Though A2's main goal is not the destruction of YoRHa units, she will destroy them if they chase after her. A2 continues to fight due to her oath with her comrades who fought with her during the descent operation, and especially her promise with number 4.

Are there any androids above YoRHa in the chain of command who's responsible for calling the shots in the war against the machine lifeforms?

There aren't any. YoRHa, Resistance members, other androids from the orbital bases, as well as the androids fighting in The Kingdom of Night are all equal below the council of humanity.

※ This is the region of the Earth that's permanently night, which includes North and South America.

Who is the 'god that emerged from the volcano' as depicted in the picture books?

See "Prometheus's Fire".

Does Leonard III, the lord of Schwanstein Castle in the forest kingdom, have anything to do with Leonard from the first DOD game?

Nope.

One of the archive entries is a flyer for Accord's shop. Does Accord exist in this world?

Yes.

Do you have any ideas for a sequel? Any offers from Square Enix so far?

Nothing.

Last but not least, got anything to say to the fans?

E591aae381aee58583e587b6e381afe3808ce5a4a7e781bde58e84e3808de381aee697a5e38082
(All curses stem from the day of the Great Calamity.)

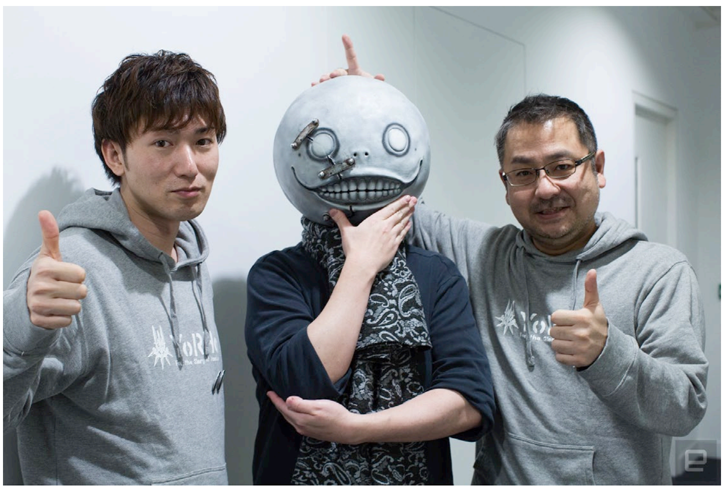
Numerous facts from Live Broadcast at STORIA (translated by

YOKO FACT 28 – Dengeki PlayStation (Vol. 638) - Questions for Yoko Taro (translated by

YOKO FACT 29 – Interview for GameInformer by Imran Khan (01/01/2019)

This interview with NieR:Automata director Yoko Taro and PlatinumGames' designer Takahisa Taura was first conducted in March of this year. Square Enix then offered us another chance to talk with Taro again, this time with Keiichi Okabe to speak more about the game's creation, music, and design philosophies and we are taking this opportunity to combine both until-now unpublished interviews together.

At the start of the first interview, Taro Yoko, whose pen name is appropriately Yoko Taro, was surprisingly quiet. He took a gulp from a bottle of Diet Pepsi and looked me straight in the eye to say something. I looked to the translator, who laughed at whatever Yoko said. She began "Yoko-san wants you to write about how expensive the food and drinks are here, if you can. He says it's way too much."



From left to right: Takahisa Taura, PlatinumGames' senior game designer for NieR:Automata. He also worked as a game designer for Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance.

Yoko Taro in the middle, being all smug.

Yōsuke Saitō, NieR:Automata producer. The game would probably not exist without his help convincing executives at Square Enix to revive the franchise.

With NieR:Automata, you guys won a Game Developer Conference award. How do you feel about that?

Yoko: We heard it was a user's choice award where the players themselves select the winners, so I'm just really happy that the players have selected our game for winning the award.

How did PlatinumGames and Yoko-san first meet on NieR? Why did you decide on that project versus something like another Drakengard or a new IP as a whole?

Taura: I loved the previous NieR title, I actually went to Square Enix saying "Please let us create a NieR sequel, because you haven't done anything with it for a long time." At the same time, there was coincidentally Saito-san, the producer for NieR:Automata, talking with Yoko-san that they wanted to do something together. It just so happened that it was the right time, right place and we met for the first time when we started this project.

When you started working on NieR:Automata, did you know what it was going to be? Did you have an idea in your head of what a NieR sequel would look like after the first game?

Yoko: Not at all, I had no ideas for a sequel in mind. When I first heard that we might do a collaboration with PlatinumGames, the image I had of them is that they only create Sci-Fi action games. When I thought of that, I thought of what part of the NieR storyline might fit in with that Sci-Fi action gaming sequence, I selected the themes for Automata because I felt it just fits in with the PlatinumGames style.

PlatinumGames has a reputation for fast, often-challenging action games, but NieR:Automata is a lot easier. Was that intentional to keep it closer to the first NieR or perhaps a consequence of trying to make PlatinumGames action more mainstream?

Taura: That's actually exactly the reason why. Saito-san from Square Enix told us when the project started that, since the original NieR has a lot of female fans and a lot of non-action gamer fans, to make the game as fun and accessible as possible to people who aren't accustomed to playing difficult action games. We always thought of making the game into something that's fun to play for newcomers to the action game field, but also to the more experienced players as well.

One of the usual tropes of PlatinumGames is that, as the game goes on, it tends to escalate more and more to an explosive finale. NieR:Automata kind of messes with that formula a little bit by Ending A being a little bit more subdued and low-key and then goes up again and again until it finishes with endings D and E. Is that something you had to work with Yoko-san about, where the escalation and pacing would best fit the gameplay?

Taura: In terms of like a climax or increasing the difficulty level toward the end, it's not that different from our other titles, or at least we didn't feel like it was that different. The one major difference was that this was the first game that I've at least worked that had the leveling up element in it. So as long as you level up your character, the boss would be easier to defeat, but if you don't, then some of the enemies toward the end of the game would be very difficult. For me, the balancing between the difficulty level of stages and bosses versus the levels the player might be was the difficult part in creating this game.

One thing that we really had it easy with in this game is that Yoko-san's scenario and Okabe-san's music, once it's mixed into the battle, makes a really menial and indifferent battle sequence suddenly becomes this dramatic and grandiose battle with everything at stake, so I felt like that really helped elevate our battle sequences as well. We did have an easy time thanks to that!

I don't know if either of you can speak to this, but the trailers for NieR:Automata were a little misleading. They showed A2, who you play as late in the game, but with short hair, so she looked like 2B. Was that something you decided, to show those scenes but not make it clear who it was?

Yoko: There were trailers like that?

There was one specifically showing A2 fighting Hegel like that.

Yoko: Ahh, yeah. There's no reason! We weren't trying to hide A2 or mislead anyone, it just happened to work out that way.

Taura: We made so many trailers at some point we kind of didn't care what we showed.

Oh, wow, that's going to shock a lot of fans in the NieR community. People really believed in the theory that you were hiding A2 in plain sight the marketing.

Yoko: Haha, but it might not be the correct answer. As Taura-san said, we made so many trailers that we can't remember them all, so I'm definitely happy to take the credit without remembering why.

Taura: Yeah, let's say we intentionally did that. For the fans. It might be true.

Yoko: But I can say, in one of the trailers is A2 fighting one of the Engels, one of the big robots. She actually has long hair in the trailer, but in the actual game, it's after she cut her, so she would have had shorter hair. That one was actually intentional because we did not reveal before the game that A2 would cut her hair, so we actually made a scene specifically with long-haired A2 to take that trailer. So that's that shot was kind of a lie.

In the Automata DLC, the CEO of Square Enix Yosuke Matsuda, as well as PlatinumGames boss Kenichi Sato, are boss fights. Where did that idea come from and how did you get them to approve it? How did they react when you asked them?

Yoko: Haha, oh yeah.

Taura: The development team went to Square Enix and said: "Please let us use him in our game!" Their reaction was initially saying "Uhm, are you sure you want to?"

We were thinking for a while of what we could do with the DLC, because we didn't have a lot of time to develop it, so we wanted to do something fun with it. When we were thinking about it, we saw that Final Fantasy XV used a character model of president Matsuda in one of their marketing assets. When Yoko-san saw that, he reached out and asked if maybe we could use that in the game at Platinum. We said that, if we get the character models, we could definitely use them for something in the game. We reached out to Square Enix and they gave us the model and we were able to use that character model for a boss fight.

If it was just that you were able to fight the CEO of Square Enix, then it would have just been the same as what Final Fantasy XV did, so we had to think of ways to spice that up even more. So, we had PlatinumGames' CEO Sato-san appear in the fight as well. We also included background music that arranged their voices, we included their voices in the music, just to add a little bit more and beat out Final Fantasy XV. That BGM track is Matsuda-san and Sato-san's debut single. We didn't even get permission from them, so it's an unofficial debut single, and those are much rarer.

Speaking of crossovers, did you know that NieR fans have been trying to get Katsuhiro Harada of Bandai Namco to put 2B in Tekken? Is that something you guys would want to do? [Note: This interview was conducted before 2B was announced as a Soulcalibur guest character.]

Yoko: For us, if we were asked, we would gladly say yes to anything for money. We're open to any kind of opportunities for anything, ever. Even if it's Candy Crush, if they want to use 2B, we will say yes, please go ahead and use her.

Actually, speaking of doing anything for money, you've never created a direct story sequel before, they've all been loosely tied together and many years apart. Saito-san has already said there will be another NieR game, if the characters are popular enough, would you create a direct sequel to Automata or would you change the characters and location again?

Yoko: I haven't thought about it once! Taura-san, where would you want to create a new game?

Taura: Actually, when I brought my concept document to Square Enix about a NieR sequel, I wanted to write a story about that prologue portion in the first NieR game. You know the beginning of the game, where you're kind of in Tokyo, in an area that's more modern? I kind of want to delve into that storyline a little bit more. So if I'm allowed to create a new NieR title, that's what I want to create. But that's just me speaking as a fan of the series, so I don't think that will actually happen officially.

Yoko: When I actually heard about that idea from Taura-san when we first started this project, I felt that it would be very difficult to make a modern recreation of Tokyo because it's the city that we constantly see every day. You just notice differences in the lies that we put in there, so I felt it would be very difficult to do to recreate a city that we know and see so much. But now that I know that PlatinumGames is such

a good studio that they most likely will have that power and talent to be able to create that kind of video game world, I think that might be an option. Whether or not we'll do that is a different question, but it is a viable option.

One of the things you said before the release of Drakengard 3 was that you wanted to call it Drakengard 4 and just let people figure out what the theoretical Drakengard 3 was supposed to be. That's similar to what you did with Automata where the game takes place 10,000 years after NieR and people who played the first game were more confused than new players. Was that an intentional idea or something you've wanted to do for a while?

Yoko: It's not that I brought over that idea to NieR:Automata, the greatest reasoning why I did this is because I wanted players who haven't played the original title to enjoy NieR:Automata so you can enjoy the game without knowing anything about the previous game. That's the biggest reason why we took a storyline that's so far in the future that it really didn't have anything to do with the previous title.

With the last NieR game, you had said that you built the game on the concept of people being okay with murdering people who are different. With NieR:Automata, the games actually became more fun to play and control and touch, do you think there's a danger in giving people that sense of ease in killing enemies in the narrative?

Yoko: In the previous title, I actually feel like I overdid that a bit. I did want to portray that enemies have a reason to live and a reason to fight on their own as well, but I feel like I forced that idea that I had in my mind a little bit too much on the players. So for NieR:Automata, I did not want to focus on it, I didn't want to impose my feelings and thoughts. I actually feel that it's fine if some people feel it's fun to kill in our games. If that's all that they feel from the game, then it's fine, because it's their freedom to feel what they want from the game. To answer your question, I think that it's fine to have that happen.

Taura: I actually have the same answer, too. I feel like if it's fun to fight, that's great as a game designer. But if you feel bad to kill these cute little robots, that's fine with me as well. I feel like different people will have different reactions to the game and they will feel differently when they play the game, so I'm actually happy to create a game that creates that kind of differences within the players as well.

Yoko: That's a really good question for us, because if players felt that it was way too fun to kill these enemies that it started making them feel guilty, that's something we didn't really aim to do. Just as we mentioned earlier, I'm really happy that players were able to take it on their own and experience it on their own, then we didn't just provide something for people to take it as-is on face value. I feel like it's great that the players are now taking the game and experiencing it on their own and trying to figure things out on their own.

There was a time after 2B was revealed that people were asking you about her design on Twitter and you answered that you just like sexy ladies. That quote has become pretty famous and attached to you and a lot of people are reading into it. Is that a thing you still believe, would you ever take the quote back, or would you have ever changed 2B's design?

Yoko: [laughs] Don't straight men like cute girls?
Isn't that common knowledge? I didn't realize that was a quote.

A lot of people use you as an example as a developer that just says what is on their mind.

Yoko: Before we released the game, on Twitter, because so many people were sending me 2B fan art, I said that "Send me a zip file of all your erotic fan art!" When I tweeted that out, my number of Twitter followers jump from 20,000 to 60,000 just with that one Tweet. I actually think it's because I did something that's more of a taboo in the western world where I talked about sexuality or gender that openly on Twitter, but that's actually...so, I do know that what I said did not just create positive buzz and there's some negative buzz around it as well, but I feel like it kind of has to do with the Japanese culture where we're not too strict about gender and sexuality and being more open about talking about those things.

I think it's the same thing as reading manga as an adult, it's a little bit different when you think about it because in Japan that's more common, it's not considered something weird or something outlandish. With that kind of feedback that I get from fans, I just feel like it's the difference in culture between Japan and the rest of the world.

That is something you tend to tackle fairly often. Drakengard 3 was partly about sex and sexuality treated casually within the game's universe, is that something you feel doesn't translate across all regions?

Yoko: I actually don't think [translating across regions] has a lot to do with sexuality. I don't think it would have sold more copies of Drakengard 3 if I took away aspects of sexuality or added more in there. I feel that NieR:Automata sold well because we worked with PlatinumGames, so I don't think that has anything to do with a sexual nature.

When NieR:Automata released, it did so in a three-month time-frame that several other big Japanese games came out in the U.S., like The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild and Yakuza 0. A lot of people started heralding those games as a return of Japanese development in the west. What do you think about going from fairly niche games to what some people consider the tip of the spear of modern Japanese development?

Yoko: First and foremost, just to speak about having so many good titles in that timeframe, my thought was "Are you people trying to kill me with this?!" In Japan, Horizon came out first, then it was NieR, then Zelda, and I think in the west, it was Horizon, Zelda, then NieR in North America. So we're literally sandwiched between those two with a two-week window in between each and they were all very similar to us in the futuristic setting. Especially for Zelda, it was one of the titles we copied in the first place, so I really felt like they were trying to kill us at the time.

Personally, not even thinking about NieR:Automata during that time frame, I was running around excited about all the fun-looking games coming as a gamer myself.

Hideki Kamiya [PlatinumGames] has once said that NieR:Automata saved Platinum. Is that something you agree with and how has the relationship been between PlatinumGames and Square Enix?

Yoko: Speaking from my perspective, of course Taura-san will likely know more about it internally at PlatinumGames...Kamiya-san, he's very laid back on Twitter, but when you actually really talk to him, he's a very serious person and very sincere. I guess NieR:Automata did generate sales for them, because I received a direct letter of gratitude from him saying "Thank you very much for creating a great game." I don't even know if we saved them or not in that sense, but just receiving that kind of message from was just very heartwarming and I was just really happy that I was able to provide such a game for them.

Taura: You could make the headline of your article "Yoko Taro Saved PlatinumGames" and that's definitely true.

Yoko: It's a very true headline.

Why do both of you think that NieR:Automata was more successful than Yoko-san's previous games or most other PlatinumGames titles?

Taura: Mainly because PlatinumGames' sensibilities were much better than Yoko Taro's.

Yoko: I actually think it's the Square Enix brand, the name Square Enix gives a more reliable feeling to an otaku type of title. PlatinumGames' strong name is known for making really good action games and I think the combination of the two really helped. This time with NieR:Automata, we sold about 2.5 million copies and the previous title we sold around 500,000. For the last game, we weren't really in the red, but it wasn't exactly a success either. We have these passionate fans that really supported the time from announcement and the series as a whole. Of course for Automata, too, we had a very passionate fan base including the media and including yourself that gave impressions and articles that helped make the game into a success, so I'm just really grateful for the fans and media alike that really supported the title and were passionate about it.

The remainder of this interview took place a few weeks later with Taro Yoko and NieR:Automata composer Keiichi Okabe. Okabe is also known for his work on both NieR titles, Drakengard 3, Tekken, and contributing some tracks to Super Smash Bros. Ultimate. Before we started recording, Yoko said it will be okay if I asked Okabe most of the questions and I remarked that I wouldn't want to make him jealous. He paused for a moment and then said it doesn't matter because he would get paid either way.

You two have been working together for a long time, I was curious how much the music composition is tied in with the writing. One of the city themes in NieR:Automata uses similar composition to a track in NieR. Does that come from the writing or the musical identity of the series?

Okabe: Since Yoko-san is I feel the type of person that doesn't want to do the same thing over and over again, even if he did receive praise for what he did previously, I kept that in mind while I was composing music for NieR:Automata. I also wanted to have some kind of connection that you would feel as a player between the previous title and this one, so I used similar tones from previous titles or from the previous game. It might not be exactly the same, but I used some similar types of music lines from the previous title so that you might feel that kind of connection.

But we do have tracks that are arrangements of previous tracks from older titles, but that was mostly for fan service.

I kind of wanted to drill down a little bit this time and get to the core of your philosophy of why and how you make games. If you had to pick a reason to hold up and say "This is why I make video games," what would that be?

Yoko: I feel that video games, amongst all the different entertainment mediums, have the most freedom in what you can do as a creator. For example, in a film, if you are able to control movement, then that's no longer a film in my eyes. In video games, you could have film-like cutscenes and videos, you could have them going on forever as much as you would like as a creator. That kind of freedom to do that is what I really wanted to do and I feel like video games are what provides me that option, even if I never do it.

Is there any kind of message you use games for that you want to convey to your audience or anything you want them to hear from you? Or do you prefer to let them take whatever interpretation they get from your games?

Yoko: It's the latter. I would want our players to freely interpret what I've created just on their own, to grasp something for their own. I feel that's one of the interesting aspects of video games is that you are able to freely interpret what's being shown to you. I also feel like the players make the game whole by playing it. The action of playing the game I feel has meaning in itself and because of that I want the players to find something from the game, feel something from the game, for themselves.

NieR:Automata won a number of awards, Okabe-san you won best music at The Game Awards, Automata won the audience award at GDC. Is there any pressure to appeal a more mainstream audience with your next game?

Okabe: For a popular title that will be played by many, it doesn't really matter what kind of genre you put out musically. I will still be interested to compose music for those if possible. I would have to take a different approach to that kind of mainline titles, whereas for NieR, I felt that the music can be more geared toward a core audience where only those who would understand the music would play it. But at the same time, once you understand, I want you to be deeply affected by it. That's what I aim for with NieR. If I am to work on a way more mainstream title next time, I will have to change that mindset I have as a composer, but that would be something I'd like to challenge myself more. To answer your question, yes, I'd like to try that, but I'd also do whatever kind of jobs I'm assigned to.

Yoko: For me, my games I actually think are really niche. How NieR:Automata was so successful was actually just a coincidence. To make a successful game is something that I can't really aim to do, so I think that I'll probably return to my small and dark corner, my niche corner, with my successive titles.

Who would you both consider your inspirations for writing and composing?

Okabe: For me, it's obviously more of a composer than a writer, but I don't really focus on one person. I tend to just try to get music here and there and have a wide net. I am greatly affected by people who I've listened to in my youth, like Japanese composer Ryuchi Sakamoto, Ennio Morricone who creates film music, and also pop music like Michael Jackson and Madonna. I am affected by those as well.

Yoko: I have received inspiration from a lot of things, but I think personally expressions in film or any like visual production is something I'm deeply affected by. For example, Neon Genesis Evangelion by Hideaki Anno, that was really a strong influence on me. Also, the drama series 24, the way that they incorporate speedy and complicated constructions of storylines was something that was very new at

the time. Just throughout the timeline of visual production, I think there's a sudden burst of evolution, and I think that "that" moment in a title that does that just greatly affects me and becomes an inspiration for me. But I feel that can be said for the rest of the world.

Lately, anything that Christopher Nolan creates I think is very intriguing where he tries to include deep knowledge and thoughtfulness into what he creates. I'm very interested in this new wave of evolution.

Last year, with the release of Animal Crossing on mobile, you talked on social media about how it was your favorite game of the year because you created a narrative where the characters were all unwillingly imprisoned in the camp. Do you often create your own narratives for games?

Yoko: I do that for some games and I don't for others. Off and on, I guess. It's a lot easier to create my own storyline per se for a more primitive game. For example, in Zelda: Wind Waker, you start off with a grandma and your sister living on an island and it's really happy and joyful and there's really no reason for Link to get out of there and fight Ganondorf because you're already living happily. You don't need to get out of that happiness. As a gamer, I felt the kind of sadness to have to leave that happy island life.

In Dragon Quest [V], you have to choose who you want to wed, and I felt that I couldn't really get into liking either of the characters. I also couldn't find the point of having to decide who I want to marry, so I just at that instant I turned off the game and said "My journey ends here!" My mind narrated "The three of them went on the journey and lived happily ever after, the end." That was my ending for Dragon Quest V.

Around the release of Drakengard 3, you spoke about how it's not possible in this industry to make a six-minute game and sell it for $60, no matter how good those six minutes are. Is this something you still think?

Yoko: That analogy was given to explain that, no matter how much you try to make a game really good, there's a limit to what you can do. If you are to create a six-minute game, because you can't go through a lot of different stages, you would have to create one stage. Which means that you could really refine the quality of that one stage without having to put in a lot of money into it and a lot of manpower into it. Also, because it's only six minutes, you can't really have too many characters in it, so you could focus on one or two characters at max. By doing that, you could refine the quality of those two characters. But because you're time-limited, no matter how much you refine the quality of the world around you or the characters, if you're limited to six minutes there's just so much you could do that the game won't become good at all. That was an example for me to say that there's a limit to what you can do in video games.

Okabe-san, in the music for a lot of Yoko-san's game, you use constructed or uncommon languages, is there a specific reason for that?

Okabe: [laughs] Yeah, for one, because it is NieR:Automata, Replicant, and Gestalt, they all take place in a unique world, even though they're in the timeline of our current world, it's so much in the future that it should feel kind of foreign. That's one of the reasons why I went for language we can't understand, but another is that, in games in the past, game directors actually got mad at many occasions for including vocals into the soundtrack. They were saying that it would become too distracting from the gameplay and would distract the player. It was considered more of a taboo, so for NieR, I included vocals in there without a language you could understand more for the sound that you get from the words. It wasn't to convey any meaning of what was being said, but more for a sound impact.

Yoko-san, you tend to have very sad endings in your games, with the exception of NieR:Automata which is as happy an ending as you can get with most characters dying. Why do you tend to write toward more sad endings and do you feel like Automata's happy ending fit the game better?

Yoko: The reason why I created endings that end on a death is because, until now I was creating games where you would kill a lot of enemies, but I've always felt that it doesn't feel right when the protagonist has a happy after they've killed so many enemies during the course of their journey. That's why in Replicant and Gestalt, or my previous titles, the protagonist pretty much ended up dying because I didn't feel like it was right for them to have a happy ending. But for NieR:Automata, 2B and 9S, from the time that they were given life, they've been killing a lot of enemies, but they've also been killed by them many, many times, and regenerated many times. They've actually been killing each other, which you find out at the very end, many, many times as well.

So I felt that kind of cleansed them of their sins for killing so many enemies, which made me feel that a happy ending was more fitting for those two.

Do you feel like that cycle of violence and death and the consequences of that are human nature?

Yoko: I think the reasons why we kill in video games do kind of shine light on what's kind of broken within humanity or humans in general. We want peace in the world, but we also enjoy killing others in video games, like shooting guns in video games. I think that's karma in a sense for humans, the way that video games grasp the true essence of humanity, whether or not that's what they were aiming to do.

Is there a series that you know, like Persona or Yakuza or anything like that, that either of you would want to work on?

Yoko: A series or anything?

It can be anything.

Yoko: Personally, it's not a Japanese title. I'd actually love to see how western titles are developed, because I have no insight into how they're made. There was a moment in time where I felt that it might be fun to join a western development to see how things run. Of course there's the language barrier that would make it difficult for me to do that, but generally speaking I feel that western storytelling follows kind of a similar route for all the stories that western mediums create. I would feel it fascinating to find out why western games use certain flows and storyline arcs.

Okabe: I'm kind of a fanboy myself, so there is a part of me that wants to work on major titles like Dragon Quest. I feel that if I do work on those titles, the pressure of working such a known title would be just too big and because there is a part of me that really loves that series, I feel like I would try to skew my music in a way that would fit into that series instead of trying to create music that I think is good. I don't feel like I would be able to bring out the best quality in my music if I worked on those big titles, because of that pressure and because of the image I have of those titles in my mind. Currently, I want to work on those major titles and the part of me that's telling me I shouldn't do it are about equal.

Was either of you surprised by NieR:Automata's success?

Yoko: [in English] Oh yes.

Okabe: For me, I live in Tokyo and developer PlatinumGames live in Osaka, so we did have quite a distance in-between, like literal physical distance between us. From the moment that I created the music to when I was able to see it next, there was a big gap in time, so when I was able to hear my music in the game for the first time, the game was pretty close to finished, they were almost done with development. At that moment, I thought "Maybe this one might sell?" But at the same time, I didn't think it would become this big of a success, I always thought it might do better than the previous titles, but it was like a hunch that I didn't feel until this time in Yoko-san's titles. I did have some kind of a gut feeling that it might do well.

The last song of Automata, Weight of the World, had a chorus with the entire game's development staff at PlatinumGames and Square Enix singing along to encourage the player. Why did you decide on that for the final song of the game?

Okabe: I didn't remember this, I actually forgot about it for a while, but Yoko-san actually came to me telling me that he wanted a chorus at the end of the game pretty early on in the development process. I apparently made a disgruntled face at him and did not remember why I even made that face or even that I made that face. After a while, I actually remember why I had such a reaction with the disgruntled face, because there's a couple of different types of choirs, but Yoko-san likes the more classical choir, so when he requested that he wanted a choir, I thought he wanted that classical type of choir at the last part of the game. At that moment, I thought "Well, that doesn't really fit in with the game plan, I don't really want to do that," which is why I had that expression on my face. After we talked about it, Yoko-san mentioned that wasn't really what he was going for, he said that because that last scene is all about all these different people helping you, he wanted everyone to sing, he wanted it to feel like everyone is singing there with you as you play.

When I thought about doing that, and I actually agreed that might be a good idea, because in NieR:Automata all the choir vocals that you hear in the game, it's actually recorded by a small group of singers, I just overlapped their voice so it sounds like a big choir. Because that last part of the game is more about you playing among a lot of people, I felt that taking that approach again of overlapping voices again would not really work. So, I reached out to the dev teams because they were working on that part and I thought it would be a good idea to have them put themselves in the game as well. I also thought that they don't need to have a good voice, it's just to give that feeling that you're playing with all these developers.

Development teams from Square Enix, PlatinumGames, and also some composers from my company who didn't work on NieR:Automata are singing in it as well. There's also children of PlatinumGames developers and their family actually singing in it as well. That was the reasoning behind why we decided to do that at the end.

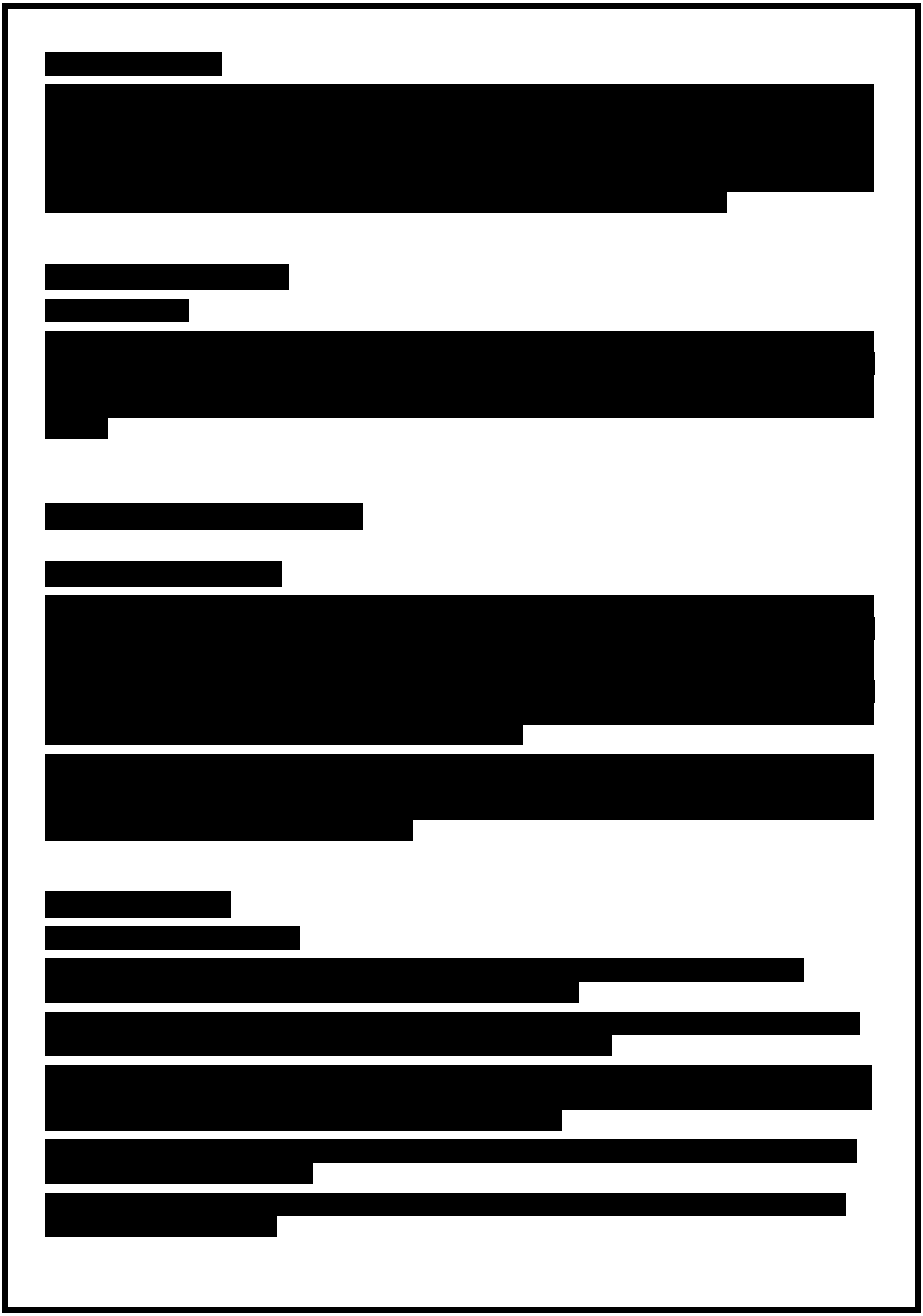
Has there ever been, in all your games you've made, an idea you had that you had to be talked out of?

Yoko: For the first Drakengard, I had an idea of [Japanese pop-star] Ayumi Hamasaki, like her character model, wearing all-silver spandex, like a giant version of her descending from the sky and you would fight against her by music. Everyone else on the staff shut it down. It does still leave that kind of music game essence kind of in there, but the part Ayumi Hamasaki comes out in silver spandex has been taken out.

Isn't that kind of similar to Drakengard 3's actual ending?

Yoko: Similar, but I actually wanted to go for something funny, or shockingly stupid. But no one would let me.

YOKO FACT 30 – NieR:Orchestral and NieR:Orchestral Concert Comments (translated by



Weapon Stories

Records of unknown times



百獣の剣
Beastbain

■ NieR:Automata

Once upon a time, there were three princesses. The middle princess wasn't very bright, but was renowned by all as a great beauty.
Once she came of age, she was married off to the king of a neighboring nation.

The neighboring king adored his new wife and treasured her looks more than anything else. He gave the middle princess six new dresses and eight fresh flowers every day, and his love caused her beauty to shine even more.

The middle princess did all she could to remain beautiful for her king, but she knew time would eventually catch up with her, as it did for all. So, after much hard though, she developed a cunning plan.

The middle princess had herself stuffed and mounted so she could remain beautiful for all time. The king wept joyful tears at the sight, but alas, two years later, war broke out, and her body was crushed under the rubble of the castle.



百獣の剣王
Beastlord

■ NieR:Automata

Once upon a time, there were three princesses. The eldest princess was thought by all to be the most brilliant woman in the kingdom, and she soon sat upon the throne of her homeland as their queen.

The new queen raised a mighty army. To afford the endeavor, she taxed her people, and in turn, they were given jobs in new factories created to support the war effort.

People worked. Money flowed. As the army grew strong, the demand for factories grew with it. And then the cycle repeated. More work. More money. More work. More money. The queen's plan proceeded just as she had envisioned it.

TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE KINGDOM, WE WERE CONVERTED TO MACHINES TO ENHANCE OUR OUTPUT IN FACTORIES AND THE MILITARY. OUR QUEEN IN TURN BECAME THE CONTROL SYSTEM THAT RULES US TO THIS DAY.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Once upon a time, there were three brothers in a kingdom. The eldest of the three was the ruling king of the country. The king was very cruel and feared by everyone.

The king chose a sacrifice from the people every day and executed them. Today he decapitated a mother in front of her family. The mother's head rolled about three times and fell beside her killed son's head. Oh my, how unfortunate. The king saw that and laughed a disgusting laugh. "Gehehe..."

One day, the king became sick. It was a disease that made his body rot while he was still alive. Dragging his rotting body along, the king continued his executions. His advisors did not defy him, and continued executions day after day after day after day.

Finally, the king rotted and died while giving off a very disgusting smell the king rotted and died but the advisors continued the executions in front of the king and killed them every day the rotten king and the rotten advisors and the rotten people and the rottenrottenyour.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Once upon a time, there were three brothers in a kingdom. The middle of the three was a mighty general leading the army. The army was very violent and feared by everyone.

The general loved wars. He liked seeing burning cities and rolling corpses. The general dedicated his life not to conquer, but to destroy. Soldiers trained like machines destroyed all the villages and cities and countries for the general. The might general saw that and laughed. A vulgar laugh. "Guhuhuhu..."

The army marched on. They destroyed the winter country, the eastern country, the southern country indiscriminately. Obeying the absolute orders of the mighty general, for years and years they killed and killed and killed and killed and killed and killed and killed.

Eventually, the army reached a certain country. They pierced the people in the city, the armies, the princess, and the prince with their spears and killed them. In the end, a general begged for his life while crying but he was killed right away. The general's face seemed familiar. The soldiers tried to remember, but the general's daughter appeared and they were absorbed in killing her and did not think about it again.



百獣の双槍
Beastcurse

■ NieR:Automata

Once upon a time, there were three princesses. The youngest princess was widely regarded as the ugliest woman in all the land, but her heart was gentle, honest, and pure.

Hoping to aid others in need, the youngest princess would travel to the fields to offer succor to peasants–but they would reject her kindness with cruel words.

The youngest princess knew her looks were driving people away, yet she kept donating her life to the service of others, figuring that the fault lied in her own lack of devotion. Day after day this continued, for years without end.

The youngest princess died alone, curled in the back of a damn, wet alley. She was so ugly that no one had the courage to give her a proper burial. Instead, she rotted where she lay, turning ever uglier until she faded into the earth.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Once upon a time, there were three brothers in a kingdom. The youngest of the three was a lazy person who slept through his days. But the youngest brother had a cheerful demeanor, so he was liked by everyone.

Even when an epidemic broke out in the country, the youngest brother merely hummed to himself while lazing about the palace. But the people in the city found healing in his cheery voice so they praised him. That person is amazing. He really is.

Even when the country was involved in war, the youngest brother merely talked about things past while lazing about the palace. But the people in the city could forget the war with his anecdotes and comforted each other. That person is wonderful really wonderful.

One day the youngest brother was lazing about the palace again. But today he could not hear the voices of the people in the city. While lazing about, the youngest brother continued thinking...idle, "Why?" idle, "Why?" idle, "Why?" But he eventually became sleepy. In a country where everyone had died from sickness and war, only snores resounded throughout the palace today. This is a happy kingdom. A happy kingdom. A happy kingdom. A happy kingdom. A happy kingdom. A happy kingdom.



不死鳥の短剣
Phoenix Dagger

■ NieR:Automata

The girl lay there on the day of her wedding. Her parents and beloved were dead, and she herself had been violated in front of their corpses. As she swore to kill those who had done this terrible deed, a shining songbird appeared.

"Allow me to grant your wish," said the bird. "Wish upon this dagger, and never forget this hatred that you feel." The girl grasped the weapon and spat out a tearful curse: "I vow not to forget. Please! Give them a painful death!"

Time passed, and eventually, she got her revenge. Years later, when she was an old woman, the songbird appeared anew. "What of your vow?" it asked. But she did not understand. And come to think of it, what became of her beloved dagger?

That night, bandits broke into her house, assaulted her daughter, and murdered her grandchild. The songbird then reappeared with a single question: "How long will your hatred burn this time?"

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

A girl was engaged to a man who roamed the battlefields. The girl held her belief, prayed in mornings, at noon, on evenings, and simply hoped that the man would remain safe and sound. Maybe her straightforward prayers did reach – one night, a brightly shining bird appeared in her dreams and left her with these words.

"The man shall return safe and sound." At the bird's whispered words, the faithful girl cried in joy. "However," the brightly shining bird continued in its beautiful voice. "His heart won't return."

Eventually, the man came back alive, just as the bird predicted. With a plethora of scars across his formidable body. Eventually, the man did come back alive, just as the bird predicted. With a beautiful stranger at his side. Even then, the girl ran towards such a man, her heart filled with her love until this point.

The man was surprised and embraced the girl, however, he eventually fell down. Standing beside the fallen man was the girl, her right hand grasping a blood-stained dagger, her left hand holding what resembled a red-black ripened fruit – the man's heart. His heart shall never wander again. Standing in the pool of blood, the girl kissed the man's heart with an expression of utmost fulfillment and intoxicated happiness, and gave a prayer of thanks.



不死鳥の大剣
Phoenix Sword

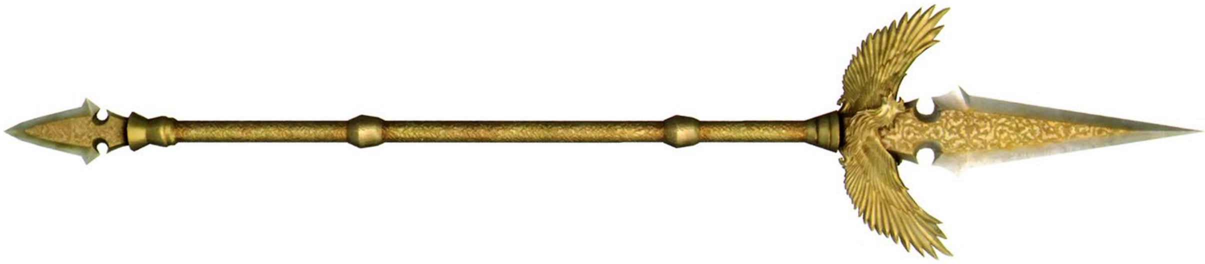
■ NieR:Automata

One day, a hawk lost its way in the woods. Its proud wings soon grew weak as it tried in vain to find its way home. As death approached, a songbird took pity on the hawk and did its best to offer aid.

The songbird slowly nursed the hawk back to health. The beautiful sight of the small white bird nestled in the elegant wings of the hawk soon made it the envy of all the creatures in the forest.

When the hawk was fully healed, it knew it was time to leave the forest. But before flying away, it promised the songbird it would one day return. In turn, the songbird gave the hawk one of its shining feathers as a token of friendship.

As promised, the hawk eventually returned–but with a human in tow. "Well done," said the human. "These feathers will sell for a great price at the market." Then he slew the songbird in one blow and plucked its carcass clean.



不死鳥の槍
Phoenix Lance

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

In a country near the border, there was a warrior who did not fear death. His formidable body was so sturdy that even arrows could not seem to pierce them. Because of that, the warrior constantly threw himself amid the battlefield.

Once, a beautiful bird appeared in the warrior's dreams. The bird praised the brave and fierce warrior, and whispered to him that it could fulfill one of two wishes – "end the war and make the world into a peaceful one" or "attain immortality".
The warrior wanted "immortality".

Ever since then, the warrior in battle became a remarkable sight. He cut down enemies like grass, and no matter how many arrows have been shot at him, no matter how many swords he's been showered in, he remained perfectly fine and continued to cut open a path in the enemies. The king bestowed numerous titles and praise upon the warrior, and the warrior thought that his glorious days will continue until the ends of time.

However, the war did not end, and the border country eventually came to destruction. The flames of battle expanded and wrought devastation to nearby areas. Trees and grass withered; the people died out, and eventually, there was no one who knew of the warrior anymore. No matter how much he starved himself, the warrior could not die. He dreamt of the beautiful bird again. He begged to die, but the bird answer that he couldn't. It told the warrior that he could never die no matter what.

■ NieR:Automata

Legends tell of a mighty warrior who had no equal in battle. Granted immortality by a phoenix, he wandered from war to war, forever searching for ways to prove his strength.

Eventually, the man's immortal body proved too much for his spirit, and he ran himself through with his own spear again and again. But each time he did, it would close over itself, leaving not even a scar.

He leaped from cliffs, threw himself into raging seas, and lit himself aflame, but nothing worked. Then, one day, he slipped mercifully into unconsciousness and awoke centuries later to find a songbird on his chest.

"You have atoned for your sins," said the bird. "If you wish me to free you from your solitary existence, I will gladly do so." The man wept tears of joy and whispered thanks to the gods before suddenly stomping the bird to death.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

This is an old story.
A beautiful bird with brightly shining feathers lived silently and carefully in the depths of a forest.

One day, a child abandoned as a burden wandered into the depths of the forest. The bird took pity on the starved and sunken child, and pecked off one of its feathers to give to the child. The child brought it back and pleased his relatives, and he was able to live with his family again.

Hearing the story, people barged into the forest one after another, and told the beautiful bird of how poor, how unfortunate, and how unrewarded they were. The beautiful bird took pity on them, and gave them one shining feather after another, and when it gave its last feather, the bird's beautiful body was reduced to a sorry state. However, the ugly bird did not have any regrets.

The ugly bird that lost its feathers was freezing in the cold, and the child from before appeared in front of it. He told it that he was searching a brightly shining and beautiful bird to repay his debts. The ugly bird was overjoyed, and told the child of its desire. "That was me. Please, would you not keep me warm in your chest?" But the child merely took one glance at the ugly bird and called it a liar, killing it with a huge sword and eating the burnt bird, afterward, he continued to search for the beautiful bird.



白の契約
Virtuous Contract

■ NieR:Automata

How long can I fight amidst this bloody vortex of a battlefield? How long, I wonder?
How long can I continue to protect what I love amidst this endless war? How long, I wonder?
How long can I continue to believe in a world laden with deceit and folly? How long, I wonder?
How long can I lie to myself as I despair at the dark future of this world? How long, I wonder?



白の哀哭
Virtuous Grief

■ NieR:Automata

I see you in my sleep.
Restless sleep.
My heart flies to pieces each time I wake.
I burn to see you in the real world.
I hunt for the woman who pines for you.
The scream pleases me.
Your body and heart shall be mine.
Your heart. I love it.
Yet it does not return my love in kind.
All you care for is your cold, dead wife.
So I must at least take your body.
Your head is mine. Beautiful head.
The eyes that scorned me are so lovely now.
Hate me if you like. Begrudge me all.
You are still mine forever.



白の矜持
Virtuous Dignity

■ NieR:Automata

The elegant white spear was crafted by a tyrant as a gift for his wife–whose parents he had killed years earlier. She slipped it under the bed they shared, then later used it to run him through 30 times.

The spear's second owner was a courageous, bandit-fighting mayor. In her later years, her strength faded, until one night, a pack of young thugs surrounded her and took all that she had–including her life.

The third owner was a greedy merchant who lived to swindle customers. Soon, she found herself shunned and penniless, and so decided to hang herself. The unused spear rested in a corner of her home as a decoration.

The fourth owner was a meek young boy who wanted to aid his sickly younger sister. He gave all to his cause–including his very existence and that of all else in the world.



白の約定
Virtuous Treaty

■ NieR:Automata

First encounter with my lover
Failed to connect with my lover
Far away went my lover
With death went my lover to eternity

黒の慟哭
Cruel Lament



■ **NieR:Automata**

I take up the sword and battle for you.
My heart knows not fear,
instead burning with a love strong and pure.
I swing my sword for you,
spattering blood across my sleeve.
I smile as the chaos continues.
I brandish my sword for you.
Victims uncountable. Victims beyond measure.
Their dying wails become the song of my sleep.
I cry out "Give me your head!"
I capture you as you flee and take it.
I do all this for you. For you. For you.
...Who are you?



黒の誓約
Cruel Oath

■ **NieR:Automata**

Once, long ago, there was a group of seven boys who were born in the same village. Though they were not brothers by blood, they treated each other as family.

One cold night, a fortune-teller appeared and warned of a traitor among them. The boys laughed it off and went about their business, but the next morning, one of them lay dead.

With each passing night, another boy died. The survivors grew more and more suspicious of each other, each harboring terrible doubts about what happened to their brothers.

On the morning of the seventh day, a single survivor stood tall. Cleaning the blood from his hands, he chuckled to himself. "Better go find the traitor!"



黒の血盟
Cruel Blood Oath

■ **NieR:Automata**

I'll never forget the time we met. I knew ours was a love that would last for eternity. But even when by his side, his feelings were a mystery. It was painful not to know what he was thinking. So painful.

When I was close, I hurt him. Yet being distant hurt him more.
I finally found my place in life.
A place where I am as close as possible, yet eternally distant.



黒の倨傲
Cruel Arrogance

■ **NieR:Automata**

A beautiful female artisan crafted the dark, hideous lance. As people far and wide praised its design, the artisan's apprentice grew jealous and slew her, the lance itself soon vanishing into the mists to time.

The lance's second owner was a puppeteer who crafted a clockwork doll capable of doing nearly anything. When he put the lance in the doll's hand, she lashed out and pierced the puppeteer's skull right between the eyes.

The third owner was an infant prince who was gifted the lance by the queen regent. She died soon thereafter, and on the night of her funeral, the lance vanished from the infant's room, leaving behind only a tiny corpse in the crib.

The fourth owner was a simple, honest man who wanted to aid his sickly daughter. He gave all to this cause–including his very existence and that of all else in the world.



四〇式拳鍔
Type-40 Fists

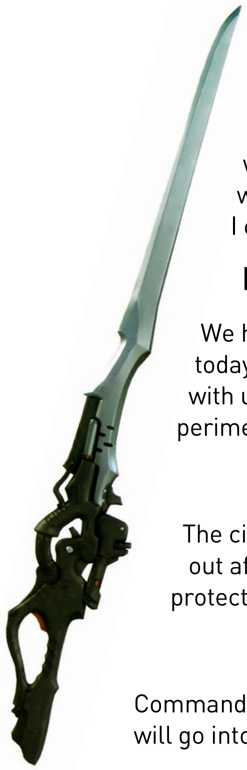
■ NieR:Automata

```
> System YoRHa
> Unit Data Uploading…
> Checkout H.C.

> Close I.O.
> Duplicate Core
> Find YoRHa unit

> Updating Data…
> Checking Data
> Purge Conversation Log

> Purge Unit Data
> Purge System Data
> Exit
```



四〇式戦術刀
Type-40 Sword

■ NieR:Automata

【 YoRHa R&D Team Journal: August 29 】

Held a progress-report meeting for the new weapon. Considering how many observers we have from the other orbiting satellites; I can tell they expect a lot from us.

【 YoRHa R&D Team Journal: December 10 】

We had our first core-installation experiment today. Saw some troubling signs, including issues with unexpected irregular output and core perimeter defenses.

【 YoRHa R&D Team Journal: January 8 】

The circuits of three consecutive staffers burned out after attempting to remove the core's protection. I've requested replacement personnel.

【 YoRHa R&D Team Journal: January 15 】

Command pulled the plug on our project. The weapon will go into official operation with the core still sealed.



四〇式斬機刀
Type-40 Blade

■ NieR:Automata

Development Journal: 0503 Takada
I've come up with an incredible idea–something no one has ever done before. I'm going to start testing it out first thing in the morning.

Development Journal: 0704 Takeda
The boss turned down my idea of infusing metallic alloys with magical elements. Thrice-damned fool! Doesn't he see how much money we could make from this?

Development Journal: 1201 Takada
Things aren't going well. My hair is falling out. I think it's stress. I've got to find a way to make this project succeed, and soon!

Development Journal: 1215 Fujita
I looked over the data, but couldn't work out the problem. I'm not giving up though. With Takada dead, it's up to me–I'm the only one who can carry on his work…



四〇式戦術槍
Type-40 Lance

NieR:Automata ■

Hi guys! It's me, 42S–your favorite YoRHa Squadron idol from North 12C Defense HQ. I'm here with the latest hot scoops from the front line, so let's get out there and do our best, all right? Goooo team!

Hey ho, battlefield buddies! I'm not gonna lie here–the current war situation isn't looking too optimistic. But we're expecting reinforcements from our orbiting satellite bases any moment, so don't give up yet! Glory to mankind!

Mayday! Mayday! This is Publicity Agent 42S from North 12C Defense HQ! Is anyone listening? Our facility has been completely surrounded by machines! I don't know how much we can ho–

[NO BROADCAST FROM THIS CHANNEL]

機械生命体の剣
Machine Sword



■ NieR:Automata

The more old records I read, the more fascinated I become by the species known as humans. We machines must do all we can to preserve these precious artifacts and continue to record their contents.

I see from these records how important predation and reproduction were to human survival. And yet, they viewed such acts as sinful. I wonder why?

I found a famous human book today, but after reading it ten times, it still makes no sense to me. What possible attraction could there be to such a thing?

Eureka! It seems the answer was in front of me all along! I am simply incapable of comprehending anything—about humanity OR the world in general! Ah, how wonderful it is to live in a world swaddled in mystery!



■ NieR:Automata

My name is Plato 1728. I am a failure of a machine. I was designed for combat, but I can't use weapons. Everyone makes fun of me, and my life is horrible.

I am a dumb machine. I got lost during battle and ended up in some kind of factory. I found a whole pile of dolls discarded there. They share the same fate I do.

I am a foolish machine. Today, I had to fight at that factory. All of the dolls got completely destroyed. Crushed by my friends and foes, who can do nothing but fight fight fight.

I activated my cannon and shot everyone there. I'm not sure why I did that. All I know is I decided to fight. Because I'm just a stupid, broken machine.

機械生命体の槍
Machine Spear



■ NieR:Automata

HuMAN fiGhT. WHy?

Why-humans love?

Why do humans band together?

You-why are you alive?

機械生命体の斧
Machine Axe



機械生命体の頭
Machine Heads

■ NieR:Automata

I LACK PARTS

I AM USELESS

MY EXISTENCE

IS UNNECESSARY

I TRIED I TRIED

SO HARD MOMMY



三式戦術槍
Type-3 Lance

■ NieR:Automata

The unadorned lance pierced her foes with machine-like accuracy. The grind of metal of bone in tandem with the pained screams of her victims created sweet music in the mercenary girl's ears.

Day after day, she returned to the battlefield to compose more music. Here, a giant of a man, fat rippling from his sides. There, a slimmer gentleman whose bones would surely produce a sweeter sound. Ah, who to stab first!?

The girl fought for an age, stabbing uncountable foes in an effort to find the ideal scream–that sonorous, bone-grinding sound. Yet perfection eluded her no matter how hard she tried. Would she ever find what she sought?

Suddenly, she turned to find a fine-looking hunk of meat at her side. Stabbing it produced a scream so pure, she couldn't help but smile. She continued to smile as she stabbed, no longer able to recall that the hunk was her own child.



三式戦術刀
Type-3 Sword

■ NieR:Automata

The craftsman's weapons were neither flashy nor attractive, but they never once failed in battle. This reliability afforded him a never-ending stream of loyal clients.

Yet something nagged at the craftsman. Though he'd forged many a weapon, he'd only tested them on pigs and cows. He wondered what it might feel like to use them on another human being.

The craftsman took a sword to a battlefield and slashed at corpses, disappointed at how easily the sword slid through them. It wasn't satisfying at all. He wanted to really feel like he was ripping through flesh.

The craftsman modified a sword in search of that feeling, not thinking at all of the pain it would cause—until one night, a bandit broke into his home, snatched the weapon up, and showed him exactly how effective it was.



三式拳鍔
Type-3 Fists

■ NieR:Automata

The man wailed an inhuman scream as he brought his fist down on his opponent's skull. He brought it down again. And again. And again. Until the victim was nothing more than a splatter of blood and bits.

The man had a beautiful wife that drove everyone wild with jealousy. They lived a simple, happy life, yet the man always strove to keep his wife safe above all else.

One night, the man came home to find a stranger in his bed. His wife told him that he had forced himself on her, at which point the husband flew into a rage and vowed to exact revenge.

The man bought a weapon from a craftsman famed for forging instruments of pain, then used it to punish his wife–for he could not abide that she failed to protect her virtue. His revenge was complete.



三式斬機刀
Type-3 Blade

■ **NieR:Automata**

The greatsword was known for the intense pain it inflicted upon its victims. This is what drove the man to carry it despite its weight, for he knew it would make others fear him, and thus could he avoid needless conflict.

The man's reputation spread through the village despite never having drawn the blade. "Don't make him use that horrid weapon," the villagers whispered. The man smiled at this, for he knew that fear was the best path to peace.

Soon, the man had craftsmen forge a host of similar weapons. He gave them to all the other villagers in the hope it would force people to solve conflicts with words instead of violence. And his plan worked...for a while.

Keeping all sides in check is simple when no one uses their power. But once that seal is broken, the end is nigh. Thus did the peaceful village transform itself into a living hell over the space of a single night.



ヨルハ制式鋼刀
YoRHa-issue Blade

■ **NieR:Automata**

Morning, listeners! It's time to kick off another installment of Listener Letters with your favorite radio idol, DJ 24D! Now let's get this day started right, shall we?

How's it going, listeners? Yeah, I know... You're all still thinking about that clean-up operation yesterday, right? We may have lost a lot of good people,
but it's still our job to get up and at 'em, right?

Howdy, listeners! Your favorite radio idol DJ 24D hasn't been receiving many letters lately. Don't you like me anymore? Haha! Or maybe no one is even listening? Whee hee hee! Anyway, who's ready to kick things off?

Hello? Is anyone there? Is this thing even on? It's me, radio listeners! 24D! I'm an idol, remember? An idol!
An idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an idol an

ひのきのぼう
Cypress Stick



■ **NieR:Automata**

I was in a dead sleep when mum started shouting. "Wakey-wakey!" she squawked. "Rise and shiiine! Today's a very important day! Today's your first visit to the castle!" ...Annoying, right? But I got up anyway.

Today's my 16th birthday, and I have an audience with the king. Mum's apparently worried that he'll charge me with some big important task, so she gave me a cypress stick for...some reason. Pffft. Like that'll help.

As we walk to the castle, Mum keeps blabbing about how excited she is and how long she's been waiting for this day. She's told me this story a million and one times, so I just keep quiet like always.

When we arrive, I see my friend coming out of the castle. He's 16, too, but his fearless gaze makes him look like a legendary hero-to-be. I'm sure he's got a lot to live up to! MY dad's just a carpenter, so I've got it easy, heh.



鉄塊
Iron Will

■ Drakengard

This is the largest sword in the world, too heavy for any mere mortal to lift. It is believed that till now, no warrior has been able to wield it.

It was ordered forged by the warlord Vahk the Pitiless. Made from the melted armor of his vanquished enemies, the sword announced Vahk's might and grandeur to the world.

The sword grew heavier and heavier each time it took a life, and it gradually became increasingly difficult to wield. At last, even its mighty owner could no longer swing it.

One morning, Vahk the Pitiless was found dead. Beside him, dripping with flesh and dyed scarlet with blood, lay the sword. Who had managed to raise the mighty weapon against him?

■ Drakengard 2

What was once hailed as the largest blade in the world, striking fear into the hearts of men, now bore no trace of its former glory. Only a shattered heap of iron remained.

Back when this heap was still a sword, its owner had tried to fuse it with an unimaginable variety of objects. His mania for modifying the weapon had seen its titanic form incorporate armor, other swords and even the bones of the dead. Mighty though it already was, he was obsessed by the idea that it could be made yet stronger.

The blade slowly began to change color, turning crimson towards its edge. The gradation seemed to symbolize its place on the boundary between this world and the next. Certainly, it had been the difference between life and death to many a friend and foe in the past. But when its owner tried to fuse it with a baby, its blade finally shattered.

Discarded as a failed experiment, the sword longed for the days, when it had terrified men with its fearsome form... So, it searched for an owner who could forge its blade afresh.

■ Drakengard 3

The iron was beaten into shape. It stood alone in battle. The iron killed with abandon. That was its reason to exist.
The iron took countless lives to make its dream come true. The iron shed bloody tears, for it could not be human again.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

We give the cry of life. Hot iron forms our body.
Steel hammers temper our shape.
The dim light of the forge and sparks of steel watch over us.
We are the iron will. Born of the thundering roar.

We give the finality of death.
Iron skin draws out fear and terror and is bathed in flesh.
We are satisfied with the snatching of life.
We realize our purpose through the crushing of the bodies.
In our delight, we spread death far and wide.
We are the iron will. We kill. Kill. Kill. Kill.

We smash.
Hate and anger tear our body up in the midst of blood and battle.
Madness-inducing power raises a storm of blood and shrapnel.
We battle the red dragon day, after day, after day.
We are the iron will. Cursed steel sinks into the darkness of sleep.

We dream.
The dream of a tiny butterfly, wildly dancing in the rain.
We are the iron will. We dream a deep, unfulfilled dream.

■ NieR:Automata

The sword's blade, dulled by years of idleness, was–as its name implied–a mere iron hunk. Its blood-drenched youth was little more than a series of rusted memories which grated against its pockmarked steel.

Who could wield this hunk of iron now that its edge was gone? Who might love it when all it could do was bash dully against a foe instead of cutting through flesh and bone? Who would devote themselves to such insanity?

The sword signed softly, pleased to finally be at rest. But before it could peacefully crumble into dust, a group of power-hungry fools took it up and denied its reverie anew.



エンジンブレード
Engine Blade

■ NieR:Automata

A small prince rests alone in a vast, vast bedroom. He wishes his father knew how much he hates sleeping alone, but he doesn't dare to tell him. For the king is a very busy man and must not be disturbed.

A king sits alone in his vast, vast office, drowning in affairs of state. All he wants is to see his family and hug his son, but he cannot. For his every waking moment must be spent in service of the people.

One day, while eating dinner, the king asks his son what he most desires in the world. He hopes he will say that he wants them to spend more time together, but instead the boy simply points at a sword hanging on the wall.

The ancient sword is considered the sign that one is ready to rule. "Someday," the king chuckles. His son faintly smiles back at him. All he really wanted was for his father to read him a bedtime story...

草原の竜騎槍
Dragoon Lance



■ NieR:Automata

I had a dream. A dream about the day we met. He was small. He was insignificant. He was weak. Yet he hated the world just as I did.

I decided to aid him, and he did the same for me. Thus was our friendship born.

It wasn't perfect, of course. Mistakes were made along the way. Still, we remained friends.

The blue wind that caresses these grasslands has a pleasing scent. I bring my cheek to his and he twitches, almost as if tickled. Then I spread my wings and I let him ride me into the skies above.

■ Drakengard

A long time ago, there was a dragon who could not fly. This gruff yet noble-hearted dragon had never seen a human until the day he came across a gravely injured knight.

The dragon tended to the knight, but when the human opened his eyes, he stared in fright and tried to flee. In those days, wingless dragons were despised by men as ill omens.

But the knight recovered, and vowed as he returned home to repay the dragon. Many years passed. One day, the aged dragon found himself surrounded by an army of men, and he prepared himself for death.

"My wingless friend! It has been a long time!" Striding from behind the soldiers came the knight of old, now a king with an army of thousands. The dragon let out a roar of delight.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The king grew old. His piercing eyes lost their light, and his formidable body has suffered regression.
The vanity and fear he gathered upon himself throughout the years devoured his heart in their ugliness. The king was afraid. So to prevent himself from losing the borders under his protection, he repeatedly invaded the surrounding countries. The king was afraid. He could not bring himself to trust in his people's voices or his advisor's words. So he tried to take away everything with violence and tyranny.

There was one dragon that was loyal to the king. The wingless dragon followed every word that the king said. It was once saved by the king, and swore to repay his kindness with its soul. Even if they were foolish acts that it can't stand to overlook, it would follow along if the king ordered it. For the dragon, the king was justice itself.

One day, the dragon appeared before the king, covered in blood - blood spilled from the young prince when he was murdered. The one who gave the order was none other than his own father, the king. The dragon pleaded with the king. "I cannot defy your commands. But I cannot follow them anymore. Kill me." the dragon said, and lowered his head tiredly.

That's an old story. The story of a foolish king, his country that had come to ruin hundreds of years ago and a wingless dragon. Even today, wind rushes through the plains. The same wind that blew on the day the king and the dragon exchanged vows.



鉄パイプ
Iron Pipe

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

May 21st
All the money is gone, because of the food inflation that caused the war. A lot of injured people helped me out at the church. Yonah is slimming down.
I want to get her something good to eat.

July 15th
Some nice ladies were able to get us some food.
They are homeless people like us, we can join any countries' salvation groups.
They decided to let me go with them as well. Yonah is looking very lively today.

August 1st
The nice ladies were turned into black monsters by that book.
I ran in fear. That old lady isn't human anymore. The adults were all lying.
We can't get any money from them, nor can Yonah get any examination for her sickness.
This city is barricaded by the high walls and there is no way out.
I shouldn't have come here.

August 5th
It's very cold today. Summer is a lie. There is a white atmosphere.
I decided to lose the monsters, so we hid in the supermarket.
We ate some left-over canned food, but that's gone too.
Yonah kept on coughing. I have a bad feeling about this.

■ NieR:Automata

Dad, if you're cold, I can give you my hat.
You're the best father in the world, after all!
Dad, if you're hungry, you can have my cookie.
You're my favorite person in the world, after all!
Dad, if you're scared, I can sleep by your side.
You're my closest friend in the world, after all!
So please don't go anywhere. All right, Dad?
Don't leave your Yonah all alone.
...Okay?

エミールヘッド
Emil Heads



■ NieR:Automata

[09/02/12422]
I confirmed that the machine lifeforms released by the aliens have reconstructed their network. I've started to see units with gravity-controlling capabilities again as well.

[10/15/12422]
I was spawned about a week ago, so I don't have clear recollections of anything before that. Say, I wonder where the Original disappeared to all those millennia ago...

[12/14/12422]
I confirmed that the 25th one born after me has stopped his biological activity. Although we're technically immortal–since we can respawn indefinitely and all–we're still not exempt from death.

[01/19/12423]
Our memories are only copies, so they're pretty vague. That android wearing black... I have the feeling I've met her before. She had a complicated look on her face, but I can't remember anything...

■ Drakengard 2

Once, there lived two generals. One possessed supreme bravery and the other possessed supreme intellect. The two men admired each other and trained together to become better soldiers, until one day, their hearts were stolen by this ancient sword, Kingsblood. They fought to decide who should own it.

The battle for Kingsblood led to war. The brave general fought using what he called " Iron Guard" formation – a strategy dependent on sheer effort and hardship. It had served him well throughout his glittering military career. The astute general meanwhile, used strategies never before seen on the battlefield. No one knew who would prevail.

The brave general's direct approach dominated at first, but as time passed, the astute general's ever-changing strategies began to turn the battle to his favor. So the brave general's army held on with dogged determination, and managed, at length to cancel out the astute general's advantage. The war had reached a stalemate.

After the war, a villager visited the battlefield and said: "They were both great generals. If only their talents had not been polarized... If only they had possessed a balance of might and intellect, we would have been spared the tragedies of war."

■ Drakengard



古の覇王
Ancient Overlord

In ancient times, this black sword once belonged to a mighty king who built a glorious empire. Under his wise and just rule, the empire thrived and prospered, and knew no equal.

But a ripened fruit can only rot. Spoilt by their wealth and prosperity, the servants of the king began to swell with pride--and fell into corruption and depravity.

Powerless to cease the rot, the king's summoned a wicked god into the blade of his sword. He then began to murder his treacherous vassals one after another.

The god inside the blade reveled in the bloodbath. When only the king himself remained, the sword slew him as well, and the silver blade was dyed by the royal blood.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

A sword that has been passed down for centuries in the royal lineage of a prosperous and long-living kingdom. Legend has it that the gem in its hilt glows bright red when it absorbs the blood of ten thousand men, and bestows immortality upon the bearer. The last king to wield it, however, cared less for the immortality and more for the welfare of his subjects.

One day, his beloved queen passed away during childbirth, as did the child. Upon hearing that his wife and child were dead, he was stricken with grief, and coupled with his old age, the royal lineage was set to die out.

In his mad obsession with extending the life and power of his country, he took up the sword and slaughtered subjects and countrymen alike. "If I am to be the last ruler, then I shall simply never die!!"

Tens, hundreds, thousands of deaths at the hands of the king, and the gem was close to reaching its full brilliance. Finally, his heart unable to take the burden any longer, the king died without reaching his goal. If he had just reached the pregnant woman in front of him...

■ NieR:Automata

One day, bandits sacked a young girl's village. To protect her family, she took up a dagger her father had found in the mountains and killed one of them, an act that shocked her family. But the bandits fled, never to return.

Five years passed. Then ten. Then twenty. Though the family she protected began to grow old, the girl never aged. Eventually, the other villagers began to shun her.

With no one to turn to, she finally left her village and began to wander the earth, visiting many strange lands in the process. As the years passed, her skill and fame as a sword-fighter grew to legend.

Eternal life, a powerful weapon, and boundless experience - she used these talents to become the queen of a nation. And yet, there was emptiness in her life, for her still desire the kindness her family denied her after that fateful day.



王位簒奪者の槍
Spear of the Usurper

■ Drakengard

In a kingdom of the Union, a general beloved by the common people slews the wicked queen that had taken power when the king had died.

The general came from the lowest classes, making a living as a murderer and highwayman. After killing his fifteenth victim, he was at last captured by the authorities.

Judgement was swift; the sentence was death. But the general had a great advantage--he was an extraordinarily handsome man. When the queen saw him, she could not bear to have him killed.

She gave the general all her love, but her love turned to obsession. She became his prisoner, and he took her throne. People who knew him came to call him Robber King.

■ Drakengard 2

At the end of a long battle, the rebel leader finally pierced the tyrannical king's heart with his spear. As he drew his last breath, the army of the revolution poured into the castle. Now the land would be free of corruption, and peace would return. The victorious rebel smiled at the thought, but his smile was short-lived.

The last battle perplexed him. The king offered no resistance - it almost seemed as if he gave his life willingly. But would a corrupt king do that? While he pondered over this, his allied called for him to come to the dead king's chamber.

There he found the princess, bound and gagged. His allies quickly explained that they had found her like this. Feeling rather bemused, he removed her gag and heard the truth: she had been taken hostage by a spy from a nearby land, and used as a leverage to force her father to sabotage his own kingdom. "He was no tyrant!" she cried.

Moving as if to free her from her bonds, the rebel drew his knife and then slit the princess's throat. Whether or not her father had been a tyrant did not matter now. All that mattered was that the angry masses had risen up to remove a corrupt king. The truth was buried with the princess's body and her murderer was crowned that day.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

In a certain country, there lived a man who acted as a double for the prince. The man took care of official business every day in place of the prince. When he went to the prince after finishing a day's work, he found a naked woman sleeping in his room. The woman was the prince's sister. A man with the same face stared at the man's shocked impression, and invited him to join in while laughing flippantly.

The man loved the prince's sister. He also felt that she, who adored him like an older brother, loved him back. Even if goes through every day in a Façade, she was the only thing he was living for. He, who put his life on the line for the most despicable prince.

The prince took command during the war. He told this to the man who was prepared to risk his life to accomplish his job: If he managed to take the enemy commander's head, then the prince would let him sleep with his sister once. The man shoved a spear through the prince's mouth as he laughed flippantly.

After the war, the "prince" made his sister his wife and began to injure his own face and throat. He repeated his actions every time his sister called him "big brother". Eventually, the "prince" was found with his face burnt and a spear impaling him in the mouth. His burnt face looked very calm.

■ NieR:Automata

In a distant kingdom, there lived two princes. The son of the queen consort was clever of mind but weak of flesh. The son of the king's second wife was dimwitted, yet charming, and quite gifted in the art of war.

Which prince would succeed the throne? When news came down that the king had died in battle, the two men each declared themselves the next true king, rallying the people to take the side of one or the other.

In the midst of this coronation battle, a third man appeared claiming to be a prince. Bright, capable, and brave, he dispatched the two foolish brothers and went on to become a wise and just king beloved by all.

Decades later, the king announced on his deathbed that he wasn't royalty at all, but in fact was the son of a commoner. Upon hearing this revelation, the people stormed the castle and hung their beloved ruled from the rafters.

Drakengard 3

She was a prostitute with a habit of falling in love with her customers, but they fled whenever she proposed.
This puzzled her, as she was unaware her job was viewed with disdain.

One day, an ugly old man came to her. Once their business was done, the woman asked for his hand in marriage.
He began to cry, for though he was king, none had ever loved him.

The prostitute became queen of the land. But soon after the ceremony, the king was felled by his own heart, leaving her with untold fortune and all of his political power.

The woman had been so close to happiness, but now her beloved was gone.
Thus, she took up his spear—the last memento of her husband—and fled the palace forever.



信義 Faith

Drakengard 2

In an eastern land, a poet, who made his living singing songs, grew weary of his trade, when he realized he'd reached the limits of his talents. While contemplating what else he might do with his life, he saw a beautiful sword in the window of a pawnshop. Enchanted by its crimson blade, he bought the sword and took it home.

That night he slept with the sword by his side.
As he began to dream, an imp appeared and demanded a trade. He said that if the poet gave up his name, the imp would give him talent in return.

The poet gave his name to the imp without a second thought. In return, he received a beautiful body and an exquisite talent for songs overnight.

But without a name, the beautiful poet lost increasingly of his humanity as the days went by. One faithful morning, he awoke to find that he'd been turned into an imp!

Fearing to be seen in the world of men, he fled and was never seen again. He left behind the beautiful sword, now granted a name.

Drakengard

In a far-away Eastern land, there was a poet who made a living reciting songs. But he keenly felt the limits of his own skills, and so be made a pact with a ghost.

With the power of the ghost inside him, he began to compose glorious and beautiful songs. His fame spread through the city, and before long, he was named the official Poet to the Imperial Court.

But one day, the ghost returned to him, and she said thus: "Your life as a genius poet is over. You shall henceforth never sing a song again."

It was as the ghost said. The poet fell silent and no more songs came from his lips. His dream gone, he plunged this sword into his breast. It still gleams with the glistering of his blood.

NieR:Automata

In the capital of a distant Eastern land, there lived a poet who was devoted to his art. But his words failed to touch the hearts of the people, and he could make no profit from them. Soon, his life became unbearably hard.

Seeing the limits of his talent, the poet chose to abandon the pen and work the land instead. Soon, his lily-white skin began to grow dark, and his once frail body became sinewy and tough.

He eventually married a kind woman, and several years later, they had a child. As the peaceful, uneventful days went on, the man began to feel that there could be no greater happiness in life.

Or so the poet wrote before he put down his pen, swallowed the paper whole, and prayed that the next life might turn out so well. He then took Faith—already stained with the blood of another—and plunged it deep into his chest.

NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

There was a famous singer living in a city in the far east. However, he was no longer able to sing in his later years. A monk appeared by his side out of nowhere and whisper to the singer: "you should pick up this sword".

"If you kill a single person, you'll be able to sing one song.
If you kill two people you will sing two songs. Go ahead and sing some unparalleled songs!" The singer picked up the sword from the monk, hid in the night, and slashed at two bystanders. The next day, the singer can produce beautiful songs, and regained fame and fortune.

Afterward the singer sang a song for each person he killed, and sang two for every two he killed. He continually attained more fame and fortune. However, his desires could no longer be suppressed. If he killed his most important person, what kind of marvelous song would be produced?

And so the singer killed his wife and sang a song. He killed several of his children and sang multiple songs. He killed everyone in his family and he sang and sang and sang. He killed so many people on the streets that he cannot even sing fast enough. He killed and killed and killed and killed. In the end, he didn't sing anything as he killed himself. All that is left is a blood stained sword.

双子の牙
Fang of the Twins



■ Drakengard

A long time ago, there were twin gods who gave man the gift of fire and knowledge, and protected him with their wisdom.

But mankind fell into corruption, and the twin gods became wrathful. They sent storms and floods to destroy the cities, and great fires to burn the plains.

Acknowledging their sinful ways, the people offered this great axe in penitence. It was a charming offering, washed in the blood of sacrificed twin children.

The gods turned the souls of the young twins into stars. Then they sealed the stars within this axe—a grim reminder to mankind that he must never fall into sin.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

We have been together since birth.
When we eat, when we sleep and dream.
We get the same things as well.
Mommy's breasts, and daddy's gentle words.
But we died separately.
Me, at daddy's hands, my sister at my mother's hands.
They cut off our heads, and we died separately.
But it's okay.
Our blood mixed together, and stay in the same axe.
We will always be together from now on.
Two bodies will return to one.

■ NieR:Automata

Twin swords were sacrificed to twin gods and bound to an unbreakable dual-bladed axe.
Whenever nicked or damaged, it would instantly repair itself. The two blades would never part.
They would be together for the rest of time.

The souls in the blade yearned to be as one. To grow old as one. To fall in love as one.
It is why we both love the same person.

I am myself. I am myself!
Look at me. Look at me!
Give me love. Give me love!
Stop copying me. I'm not!

We are together. We are one. Life or death. Even if we kill our foes. Even if we kill each other.
Our two bodies will be as one for all time. Someone separates us. Oh god please someone help m



悪魔の穢牙
Demon's Cry

■ NieR:Automata

Once, there was a gentle angel who came to earth to provide salvation for those in need. Whether it was curing illnesses, offering blessings, or cheering the sad, he was always there when needed.

The angel, however, provided aid to sinners and non-believers as well–an act which was strictly forbidden. Each time he did so, a single white feather would fall away from his glorious wings.

One day, the angel came across a young girl with an illness that pained her deeply. But he could do nothing to help the child, for all his feathers had long since fallen off.

The angel cursed both himself and the cruelty of the world. The resulting hatred stained his body and his wings, turning them both black as night. Then, crying tears of blood, he brought his hands to the girl's neck.

天使の聖翼
Angel's Folly



■ NieR:Automata

Once, there was a demon who held an affinity for angels. He dreamed of serving alongside them and their god, yet cursed the impossibility of it all. Then one day, he came to earth, bringing himself a step closer to heaven.

An angel was sent to slay the demon. When the evil one saw his foe, he burst into tears and revealed his plan. "Please," the demon begged, "you must give me a set if white wings for my very own!"

The angel agreed to trade a set of white wings for the head of another demon. Overjoyed, the demon killed one of his own and plucked the head right off its still-warm body.

The angel then led the demon to heaven, where he underwent centuries of the cruelest tortures imaginable. Finally, the pain was so great that he lost consciousness–at which point his dark wings turned the promised shade of white.



名もなき刀工の剣
Nameless Blade

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

GAK GAK GAK GAK
A man is sweating as he chips away at iron ore.
The men's joyful singing fills the dark cave.
We are workers. We are miners.
Workers covered in dirt.
We will mine for metal in high spirits today as well.
GAK GAK GAK GAK...

VROOM VROOM VROOM VROOM
The sound of women working the furnace can be heard in the refinery. The sound of red-hot iron sand taken from the furnace.
We are workers. We are iron makers.
Workers who utilize the wind.
We will make iron in high spirits today as well.
VROOM VROOM VROOM VROOM...

GAN GAN GAN GAN
The sound of hammering for the creation of a strong and powerful sword. I am a swordsmith. A natural-born swordsmith.
A swordsmith who controls steel.
GAN GAN GAN GAN...

SLASH SLASH SLASH SLASH
The sound of flesh being slashed apart on the battlefield.
The sound of killing, killing whoever.
The sound of killing people.
Can anyone help me?
It hurts. It hurts. Help me, mother.
SLASH SLASH SLASH SLASH...

■ Drakengard 3

Yonah, stop. Sit down and eat. If you keep running around like this, you're going to drop your pie on the- See? What'd I say? You're already making a big mess...

Emil! Quit rummaging through my closet, will you? There's nothing in there but a bunch of old underwear. You sit down, too, and finish your soup.

Where'd Kainé gone? ...Huh? She went to find more food? But I gave her an entire roast pig! How in the world did she eat that entire thing?

In a quiet dream, I think of the world that was lost. I think of the people and my own past self. And I think of the happiness I'll never again know.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The shield fastened to the wall gathering dust. The sword kept within its sheath rusted. I forgot skills that I no longer use. I left my trained body as it is. I lost my judging heart.

I thought that this could end without me telling anyone. I saw others' violence, and pretended not to see. I gave up since I couldn't change it anyway. I thought that I couldn't go against great strength.

I laughed at the hearts that believed. I laughed at them for being worthless. That's how I ran from everything. I gave up, thinking that it was impossible. Foolishness and ugliness brought me much lament. I lost my life's meaning.

I lost sight of my treasured person. I could not keep believing in their gentleness. I could not save them from heart-tearing sorrow. I forgot the courage needed to protect mundane happiness. Because I thought that these words will never reach them.



天叢雲剣
Kusanagi

侘寂
Transience



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Those people were scarily hardworking. They tore through forests and hunted animals though they had no need. They learned how to preserve food that they could not finish, and tried to unnecessarily save up money. However, there were none who questioned this. Because everyone was doing it.

Those people were scarily studious. They repeatedly did numerical calculations that had no application and predicted the future, repeating their arguments. They created numerous difficult languages, made tons of complicated machinery that they threw away right after. However, there were none who looked back. Because nobody realized.

Those people were scarily obedient. When the sun rose, they got up at the same time, put on the same clothes and began their work in a stuffy room out of their own will. However, there were none who complained. Because they did not know what to do otherwise.

Those people who overworked themselves lost the forest and live on sands now. Those people who were too smart for their own good could only talk in a language that nobody else understood. Those people who behaved too well could not defy the laws that were continuously made, and lived surrounded by tens and thousands of laws.

輪廻転生
Rebirth



■ Drakengard

A circular-bladed sword owned by a noble family that lived deep within a great forest. It was said that the user of this weapon would be blessed by the gods with three lives.

The sword was originally designed as a tool for torture. Its outer blade is sharp enough to bisect a man with one stroke, while the inner is kept dull to inflict hideous pain.

Poison can be poured into the handle. As soon as the victim is cut, the poison flows into the wound and causes nearly instantaneous death.

So cruel was this weapon judged to be, it was banned by the old kings. Soon thereafter, it became infamous as the tool of assassins.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

You see this? This here is for me to cut your life away. There's no need to panic, it won't hurt at the beginning. Later, though, I'll make you feel the worst pain imaginable. And nobody screams at the pain. Just when they see themselves bleed, first.

But I'm not going to let you off so easy. This part of the blade here is very sharp and painful, so it's only for after I've had my fun. And your voice will go hoarse like that, and become loud and unintelligible. How irritating...be quiet, or my hand just might accidentally slip.

Don't worry, I'm not going to kill you. Yet. The fun part is drawing all the pain and suffering out as long as you can. You see, humans are surprisingly hard to kill. And besides, we all have two eyes...two ears...twenty digits...and one hundred and forty-four joints. We can take our time.

You ask me why I'm doing this? Heh...this is all because of you, don't you know? You're the one framing and torturing your people. You're the one putting their bodies out on display. Oh, you don't remember? Then I'll just make you remember each and every thing you've done to my family, one, by one, by one. Hahahahaha...

王妃の玉座
The Devil Queen



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

In a small country at about the same latitude as a province directly north of a city-state that included a town that traded with an island of a republic of a kingdom led by a queen,

The queen of the small country's younger brother's male cousin's elder brother's son-in-law's adopted child's minstrel lover's beautiful queen who danced on stage when he played love-struck admirer's employer's wife's secret lover's child's wet-nurse's store she commonly went to's proprietor asked,

"Where do I send the throne decorated with the decorations made of the same materials as the handle of the lid of the pot of the same weight as the tableware of the same color as the weather vane of the house of the one peeping through the door reflected in the mirror of the decorative frame carved with the carving tool made of the splinters of the grindstone that sharpened this kitchen knife?",

Of the wife's husband's younger sister's older brother's daughter's husband's younger brother's nephew's father's mother's husband's bride's niece's friend's wife's younger sister's daughter's husband's younger brother's nephew's father's mother's husband's niece's husband's younger sister's older brother's daughter's husband's younger brother's nephew's father's mother's niece's husband's younger sister's older brother's

迷宮の歌
Labyrinth's Song



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The girl had two huge horns. They were just a bit above her ears, and they looked like those of a cow. I saw the root of her horn once, and it looked like something that grew out of her skull. Of course, only she was like that. Everyone else was normal. The kid with the horns was small when she was born. Ah, I meant her horns. Well of course. If she had those huge horns, she's not gonna be able to come out of her mom's belly.

You thought that she would be bullied, didn't you? Then you're completely wrong. That child was stronger than anyone in the village. There were no males that could win against that kid. She did all the work that required brute force, and whenever Shades attacked the village, she'd always be the first to fight them. More than that, everyone loved her – she was bright and strong.

But this Shade that attacked one day was strong. The village men were tossed around like rags, and half of them were dead. She with the horns fought as hard as she could, but even she exhausted her power. At last, the Shade took her body and ripped her horns off. Her scream back then was really something. It was a sound that shook the ground. When everything settled down, I went out of my house and saw that both she and the Shade died. Both were bleeding from countless holes throughout their bodies. They...how should I put it...were beautiful, like bright red flowers. Even though that's a pretty insensitive comment.

That's the answer to your first question. Why nobody in this village can hear anything. But I want you to know – none of us blame her. It's much better than being dead. We confirmed with each other in the aftermath, but her last shout seemed to be "Goodbye". I'm proud that the last sounds we ever heard were her words of parting. Really.

迷宮の息
Labyrinth's Shout



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

That woman was unbelievably dim-witted. She was unskilled, and would take three times as longer than the average person at doing anything. She walks slowly. Talks slowly. Blinks slowly, and can't even accomplish the simple task of taking water from the well. Even when called "cow" by the children and laughed at, she could only laugh back. "Ehehe..."

That woman was unbelievably dull. Even when she fell and blood was spilled, she acted like nothing has happened. She dropped money all the time, but never tried to take them back. Even when someone badmouthed her right in front of her, it'd take her at least half a day to realize what happened. When the children saw the woman, they happily threw rocks at her.

That woman was unbelievably foolish. During the summer, when the village suffered from the sunlight, she disappeared somewhere by herself. All the children died from starvation. The villagers did not think about the escaping woman. After two days or so, rain fell upon the village and provided salvation, yet the woman did not come back. And 20 days after the woman ceased to return, a priest came to the village.

The priest held in his hand a spear with horns. The spear was sticky to grasp due to the oil. The spear was too heavy to hold and wasn't practical to use. That spear could not pierce through anything when used. The priest forcibly left the spear to the villagers, but they found it creepy, and none came close to it. The spear was not used by anyone, and slumbers even now in the corner of the village.

迷宮の声
Labyrinth's Whisper



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The beast lived in the depths of the caves. Huge horns. Steel-like body. Heated breath. The peace-loving villagers hated this monster that had a cow's head and a human's body. They were afraid. Somewhere down the road, the monster came to be known as "Minotaros of the Labyrinth".

Belying its scary appearance, the monster was very gentle. It never killed other living beings, and took extra care to not step on flowers with its boneless toes. It lived inside the caves to reassure the villagers' fear as best as it could.

One day, a girl wandered into the depths of the caves. The girl saw the monster and began screaming and crying, eventually losing consciousness due to fatigue. The monster was troubled. What should I do, what should I do. I have to send this child back to her village. Her father and mother must be worried...I have to send her back.

In the morning, two days after the girl's disappearance, she was found unconscious in front of her worried family's house. She suffered no wounds, and was merely sleeping. Her mother ran towards her, but let out a small scream at the sight of something. The monster's corpse lay a little distance away. Its corpse was impaled by numerous swords, and blood splattered all over the place in a sinister manner. However, there were no signs indicating that it attacked the girl. Not only that, it seemed like it wanted her to be away from it. Almost as if it didn't want to stain the girl with its blood. The monster curled up on itself and died, almost as if it didn't want to scare the girl.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Memoir 2003/06/12 at 15:00 - A giant white humanoid weapon (referred to as "weapon" in the beginning but "giant" now) falls from the sky in Shinjuku, Tokyo, bringing a huge amount of casualties in the area. Also, at the same time, an organism bearing likeness to that of a red dragon ("dragon" from now on) appears and was seen to engage the "giant" in combat. However, the principles and effects of its attacks remain to be determined. An emergency cabinet is formed while the self-defense squad examined offensive methods against its targets.

Memoir 2003/06/12 at 16:00 - The "giant" that battled with the "dragon" suddenly began to crumble. The cause remains unknown. The remaining "dragon" was shot down by the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's 6th Air Wing, 303rd squadron. No records were made of who ordered an attack on the "dragon". Also, the corpses of the "giant" and "dragon" were being collected, but even we could not get an official confirmation from the organization responsible for the collection.



愚者の慟哭
Fool's Lament

Memoir 2003/12 - First case of

"White Chlorination Syndrome" confirmed in Tokyo, Shinjuku.

Memoir 2004/7 - More and more humans become vicious due to the "White Chlorination Syndrome". The conflict worsens in polluted areas. While the reason still remains unknown, the infected are separated and the rioters neutralized. Main streets are blocked, and railroads are shut down, leading to the later lockdown of Shinjuku. At the same time, America offered military support unofficially, but the Japanese government remained on the fence about this issue. On one hand, research was being done within the government on the demonic element gained from the "giant" and "dragon", as well as a counter to "White Chlorination Syndrome", leading to the Gestalt Project 10 years later.

愚者の抱擁
Fool's Embrace



■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

I was saved from that entrapped despair. I was able to abandon that cursed fate. I was able to calm those wrath-filled flames. That day of our meeting changed me.

I shall burn the ground to a crisp with my flames. I shall sip blood with my fangs. I shall tear apart thine enemies with my claws. I shall soar through the sky with my wings.

If light was to be deprived of thine eyes. If blood was to stain thine skin. If thine sword is heavy. If thine mouth can no longer speak.

Even if this body burns up. Even if these words are taken away. Until the ends of this pact. Until I lose this warmth.



愚者の盟約
Fool's Accord

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

This is a story about a sad prince. A story from a long time ago. A dark force attacked his kingdom. In a single night, an army of red-eyed monsters decimated it along with enough black dragons to cover up the sky. It's been said that the King and Queen were disemboweled in the royal city under the claws of the black dragon, and the entire place was a sea of blood. The prince and his sister were able to escape, but the prince vowed to become a demon of vengeance after witnessing the disaster.

This is the story of a frightening prince. A history of a war from very long ago. A cruel and murderous prince indulged himself in the violence of vengeance. He killed all fleeing enemies as if it was a matter of course. Some people have even seen the prince slash the enemies' bodies multiple times. Not even the commander could hold him back, as the prince threw himself into the cruel battlefields.

This is the story of an unfortunate prince. A story about a rocky and unfortunate path of fate. The next battlefield was where a goddess was to be protected. The prince slashed at the enemy, cut off their limbs, opened up their bowels, cut off their heads, and gouged out their eyes. He couldn't even tell if the blood on him was his or the enemies'. The heavily wounded prince fell at last. The prince experienced excruciating pain as he lied in a puddle of blood. He looked up with blurry eyes, and saw the shape of a cursed dragon.

This is the story of a mad prince. A story from long ago about an encounter with a dragon. In front of the prince was a heavily injured red dragon. The prince wished to kill it. Even though the dragon wasn't black in color, their species was still responsible for his parents' death. The dragon spoke as the prince raised his sword. "I will let you live. We will exchange our souls, and I will give you power". The Prince thought about it long and hard, and decided to enter into a pact with the dragon. It didn't matter what he'd lose, it didn't matter if it is a dragon, nothing else mattered as long as he could wield his blade of vengeance. The only thing in the Prince's heart was a pitch-black desire.



Nirvana Dagger

涅槃の短剣

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Ever since her birth, the girl has been told that she had a fiancé. She was brought up being taught how to be a proper wife, and at night, she offered prayers for her fiancé while facing the scenery outside her window. "Lord XX, I eagerly await the day of your arrival."

Several other girls lived in the house that she lived in. They were all brought up being taught how to be proper wives, and at night, they offered prayers for their fiancés while facing the scenery outside their windows. "Lord XX, I eagerly await the day of your arrival."

One day, the girls had an argument about whether or not the most brilliant of them will be the only one chosen by their fiancé. The girls stubbornly clung to their claim that they were best suited as a fiancé, and their caretaker spoke to them gently. "Don't worry, you will all be Lord XX's wives." Hearing that, all the girls broke out into smiles.

On the day of the wedding, the girls were brought to a place with stone pavements that could be seen from their windows. One dagger was given to the girls. They were told that to meet their fiancé, they have to kill themselves right here. Hearing that, the girls fought for the dagger and committed suicide. Afterward, a temple was built on where the girls died. The temple's name was the name of their fiancé.

■ Drakengard 2

A short sword lay, at the corner of the altar in the shrine. During its construction, the sword was used to take the lives of sacrificial maidens, whose blood was offered to earn the blessing of the gods.

The number of maidens sacrificed is the number of the pillars. Each of the maidens, who died against their will, cursed the sword with their last breath.

Soon after the shrine's completion, the priests fell victim to disease and misfortune. One by one their order dwindled and the shrine was eventually abandoned in the wake of the war.

Several hundred years later, the shrine still stood. Resting on its forgotten altar, the cursed sword remained, casting an eerie light around the murdered maidens' tomb.

■ Drakengard

When the great shrine was built, young women were chosen to be sacrificed. They plunged this kris sword into their own hearts. The blade glimmers with the souls of its young victims.

The first sacrifice was a respected and pious believer. The pure woman was chosen to serve as the foundation stone of the new shrine.

The second sacrifice was a kind girl of the village. Though sad to be chosen for death, she consoled herself with the knowledge that her sacrifice would help others.

The third sacrifice was a girl who made her living as a thief. She cursed the gods angrily as her life was taken. At the moment the sword struck home, it coiled and writhed like a wounded snake.

Five's Spear

■ Drakengard 3

Life is grand. Who could ever be bored in this world? Anyway, I'm Five, which means I have five elder sisters. And there are five things I want in this life.

I want everything Zero has. She's so strong and beautiful! And I also want One's intelligence. Might as well take it while I'm in the taking business, mmm?

I'll take Two's blinding smile as well. Why not? And Three has those nimble little fingers... Oooh, I'd put those to some veeery good uses!

And Four? Hmm, Four... Well, I suppose there's that one little thing I could take from her. That thing she hasn't surrendered yet... Ha ha! See? Life is just too much fun!

Final Knell

■ Drakengard 3

This is the story of a spear that fell into the hands of a certain man. The man did not realize that his time in this world was growing short. ...But the spear knew.

The man loved the sound the spear emitted, but did not know it was the weapon warning him of his impending doom. Alas, the man died in combat, the spear echoing out across the wastes.

This is the story of one man's end. A cold, stiff body, and next to it, a spear, quietly mourning the death of its five hundred and sixty-eight master.

The spear waits for the day its cries can once again ring out. It has seen the end of countless masters across an ocean of time, and even today still waits for the next.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

There was a ceremony where fairies gather. It took place on the tenth night of full moon of the year. They gathered upon the bank of a lake beautifully lit by moonlight, and bragged to each other their vile acts in the past year.

One fairy bragged about how cruelly she killed a stubborn man. The best soldiers of a certain country had their bodies pulled apart by the fairy disguised as a prostitute. The fairy talked at length about how the men shed tears of regret without being able to put their sword skills to use, and her companions all sang cheerily.

The next fairy boasted of how sly and cunning she was. She first sunk a small boy in a swamp. His sister, who tried to save him, was sunk in the swamp as well. Just like that, his siblings, parents, relations - and even all of the villagers - sank into the swamp. The fairy recalled that scene, and she smiled while drooling.

The smallest fairy spoke up hesitantly. "I think I'm the most amazing here". The small fairy was usually made fun of, and it took all of her strength just to talk. "I pushed many life forms into the depths of terror!" The surrounding fairies clutched their bellies and laughed. They only stopped laughing after ugly monsters came out from the pathway to the demonic realm that the small fairy opened and ate all of them.



地竜の鉤爪
Earth Wyrm's Claw

■ Drakengard

An imperial archaeologist unearthed this weapon's blade from the ruins of an ancient holy place. Believed to be fossilized remains of some beast, the substance was incredibly hard.

With great care and reverence, the scientist tried to sharpen the rock. But the substance was impervious to fire, to acid, and to all the tools of his workshop.

Driven mad by the unyielding substance that say reproachfully before him, the scientist smashed it against his head repeatedly till he fell dead of his wounds.

The darkly glimmering substance was the claw of an earth dragon, and only human blood can sharpen its edge. And so, for ignorance did another scientist die.



断罪の斧
Axe of Beheading

■ Drakengard

A young couple, blessed by fortune, was to be wed. But on the night before the wedding, a small, shining spirit appeared before the young bride.

The ghost whispered in her ear, speaking straight to the weakness in her heart: "Do you wish to make him all yours? Do you wish to ensure his heart is yours for all eternity?"

When the girl recovered her senses, she found this gore-splattered axe in her hand, and before her, the bloody head of her beloved. "Now he is yours forever..."

Even now, the ghost of the young bride can be seen wandering the village, garbed in a blood-splattered dress and clutching the sightless head of the man she was to marry.

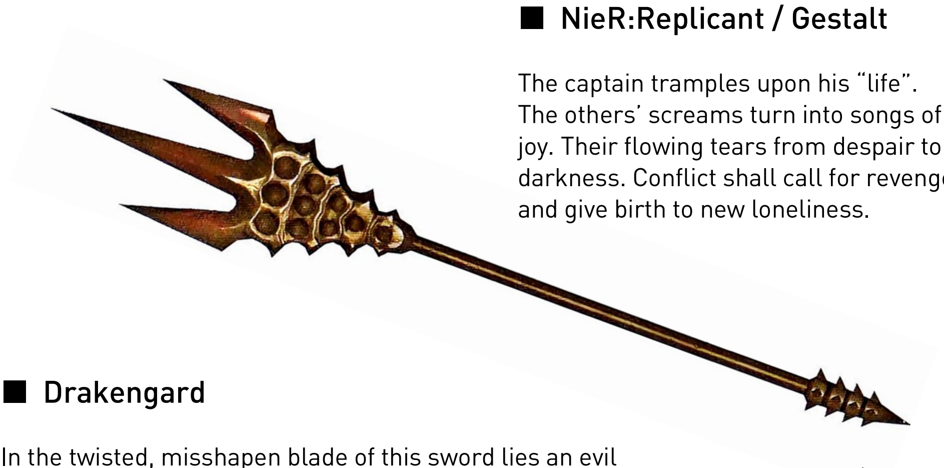
■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Deep inside the smelly museum, one old scholar sat in the dim archives. Before him was a box tightly sealed. He was told by the former owner, in no uncertain terms, to "Never open it".

Apparently, a fossil that sucks human blood was inside. How foolish. Who'd believe something like that in this time and age? You only believed in this superstition because you lived your life surrounded by books.

He opened the box. Dust flew wildly. There was one strangely shaped stone inside. Since it had a hilt, it might be a piece of equipment for some kind of ceremony... or a weapon. Such a fascinating shape. I have to do more research on this.

Still, how foolish would you have to be to fear such a thing? Hehehe... the old scholar laughed while gouging out his left eye in front of the fossil.



兵士長の聖槍
Captain's Holy Spear

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The captain tramples upon his "life". The others' screams turn into songs of joy. Their flowing tears from despair to darkness. Conflict shall call for revenge, and give birth to new loneliness.

■ Drakengard

The leader of warriors seeks out their death. Deep in his heart fall the tears of heaven. The lakes of blood glimmer like beacons in the dark. The lesson steals life and blesses it anew.



ゆりの葉の剣
Lily-Leaf Sword

■ Drakengard

In the twisted, misshapen blade of this sword lies an evil curse. Within it is the hate of the woman who used it to slay herself--and the lover who betrayed her.

All who take up this sword are bewitched, and against their own will they find they must slaughter others without mercy. Only by cutting their own arm can the curse be broken.

When a victim cuts off his arm, his soul becomes a part of the blade. He is able to wield it with nothing but the power of his own thoughts.

Only one other way exists to break the curse of the sword: If the spirit of the girl were to fall in love with the wielder, then she would lift the spell. But no man has yet won her love.

■ Drakengard 2

Once, there lived a girl, fair and pure. Born into a life of poverty, she was sent to work as a maid in the home of a noble family. There, she was treated like an animal. After months of hard labor and abuse, her mind and body began to fail her.

The only one who treated the girl with any kindness was her lord's youngest son. He comforted her, and soon they began an illicit affair. The doting girl lived for the short midnight meetings, alone with her lover

Late one evening, she made her way to the meeting place at the usual time and found her love waiting for her. But he was not alone. With him were all of his brothers and sisters. Smiling like demons, they encircled her and forced her to the ground. She lost consciousness when she caught sight of the cruel grin on her lover's face...

The next morning, the girl limped back to the mansion. In her hands she held a beautiful sword. When she caught sight of her lover, she lunged for him without a word, and pierced his and her own heart. Steeped in their lifeblood, the fatal weapon took up the scorned girl's bitter hatred and had been cursed ever since.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

I love him. From the bottom of my heart. And I know he loves me too. Every time our eyes would meet, I could see the looks he'd give me. And I could hear him telling me to keep this hidden from everyone, and to hide all my feelings and gifts for him. I kept them locked away in my room. He was my one and only.

I don't believe him. The one I thought was my friend seduced and stole him away from me, and he just disappeared and left me all alone. All that's left was me, and all the things I hid away and never gave him. I sold them all off in the market.

I can't forgive him. He was taken away from me against his will by that woman. He still loves me, I know it, and I have to make him realize how much better and prettier and nicer I am than she ever will be! I just have to get rid of her! I have to find her, beat her, maim her, and rip her to pieces!!!

Blinded by rage and jealousy, she took off after the young and naive couple, and stabbed and beat them until her sword was warped and bent from the abuse. The next day, she was nowhere to be found, and sticking out of the pile of meat and flesh that was once a couple of humans, stood the twisted blade. Countless blacksmiths forged and remade the sword, but no matter how hard they tried, it would never regain its former shape.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

Long ago, in the Land of the Golden Bird, there was a sword said to be made of every precious metal and inlaid with every kind of gemstone known to man. This sword was said to be so sharp, even a small cut by the edge of the blade would bleed out the entire body, and could never be healed.

One way or another, this sword fell into the hands of a woman selling her body. She became compelled to hide the blade in her bedding, and upon being taken by a man, she would turn the sword on him. Before even feeling any pain, the men would completely bleed out and die, and from the wounds would flow an endless amount of gold and money.

One day, bursting with wealth and dressed in the finest garments available, the woman sought to liberate the gemstones from the sword. Driven by her greed, the blade's edge turned slick and deadly, as the woman sent for the blacksmith.

On the way there, weighed down and unbalanced by the sword, the woman fell off the side of the bridge into the river. Her greed was such that even as she was swallowed up by the water, she refused to let go of the heavy blade. Her body was found the next day, drained of all its blood.



日出国の魔刃
Sunrise

■ Drakengard

A wealthy Eastern merchant spared no expense when he ordered the forging of this magnificent glaive. So fine is its blade that when it slices off a man's head, the victim feels no pain at all.

Yet it harbors evil powers. Any man who dares look into the blade sees a warped image of his face. The greater a man's greed, the uglier his reflection becomes.

When the merchant looked into the blade, he saw a reflection more hideous than any other. He could not bear to see the ugly face, and swore never again look at the weapon's shining surface.

But one day, a demon whispered in his ear, and he was again tempted to look into the blade. There he saw a face so abominably deformed and repulsive that he turned the weapon on himself and cut off his own head.

Deathdance

■ Drakengard

A long time ago, there was a small nation that was invaded by its mighty neighbor. The country was helpless as the invaders put its women and children to the sword.

In the small country, there was a brave and beautiful princess who became determined to save her homeland. She disguised herself as a dancing girl and presented herself to the enemy emperor.

The emperor, entranced by the beauty of the dance, immediately fell in love with the princess. But as he approached her, she plunged this sword into his breast and slew him on the spot.

After that, the mighty empire fell into ruin and decline, and the princess's country was saved. To this day, every girl of the kingdom dreams of becoming the dancing princess of legend.

■ Drakengard 2

Long ago, in a war-torn region where a small nation constantly fought for supremacy, one country thrived under the leadership of a great hero. In time, he became an emperor and his armies conquered the neighboring lands. Exhausted by years of war, the conquered subjects of this new emperor welcomed his rule.

The emperor held a feast from time to time. It was the one luxury he allowed himself. Disregarding the advice of his council, he would even entertain guests from enemy nations. That day, he had invited a beautiful dancer to perform for him. She hailed from a country which had resisted his conquest for several years.

The dancer possessed such beauty and grace, she stole the emperor's heart in an instant. At the end of her performance, he applauded generously and ordered her to approach his throne so that he might reward her. As he reached out to hand her a priceless ring, she stabbed him through the heart with the sword she's used in her dance.

Bereft of its emperor, the empire soon crumbled, and the flames of war engulfed the region once again. War brought suffering and death to the people of every nation. The assassin's sword was lost, but its story and cruel legacy remain.



月光と闇
Moonrise

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

There is a legend of a blade that cooled an entire country wrapped in a hellish conflagration. Out of the misery of the endless flames came the people's savior: a sword, surrounded by thousands and thousands of statues made entirely out of ice.

A man searching for the world's legendary weapons came across the sword. He bundled the sword tightly in a long roll of cloth, and took it in hand. But as he placed the sword in his pack and left, unbeknownst to him, the sword began to freeze the cloth, and soon froze him too.

A priestess traveling the world came across the sword. She offered a prayer to the gods, and attempted to draw the sword. But frost quickly spread from her fingertip, to her arm, and all across her body. As she cursed the gods she had invoked, the sword froze her too.

A slave woman, working in a cave, came across the sword. Hoping to escape her painful life forever, she gripped the handle of the sword and drew it out. But, neither did she freeze, nor was she able to thrust it into her breast. The blade's edge gleamed in the moonlight as she was beaten that night by her quickly freezing master.

■ Drakengard 2

The sword made of marble emits a fierce chill and quietly awaits its owner.

The legend told that the marble sword could freeze even its owner's age. It continues to wait patiently.

The marble sword continued to wait. So long it waited - long enough to freeze time.

The sword had waited for so long that surely even the warmth of human blood could not awaken it now. The only thing what could be said for sure is that the frozen face of its wielder would be reflected in its blade.

■ Drakengard

This sword is forged of granite that burns red with eternal heat. Only those who enjoy the protection of the moon god, ruler of the cool night, may dare grasp the handle.

Legend tells of a great warrior who carried this sword into battle. Roaring a battle cry, he charged into the fray, where a hundred enemy archers struck him through with a thousand arrows.

Yet not a drop of blood flowed from his wounds, and though arrows pierced his heart, his strength failed him not. His army was the victor on that day.

With the battle won, the warrior returned to camp. But in the instant he laid down his sword, he froze as cold and as still as ice. The protection of the moon god had finally claimed his life.

■ Drakengard 3

The marble sword was imbued with the blacksmith's blazing soul. It yearned for an owner who thirsted for blood. Who pined for battle. Who hungered for war.

But its razor edge emitted searing heat, enough to reduce to ash any stalwart warrior who wielded it.

The sword waited for a strong soul to tame its boiling heart. It waited for the warrior who would let blood spill across its blade.

Even as it took the lives of those it sought, the sword waited. It waited for a vessel for its soul, and eternity spread before it like an icy embrace.

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The two sisters were a perfect pair of walking mannequins. In no way could you tell they were mechanical. State of the art technology gave them the gift of life, of laughter, of joy, of satisfaction. But, they could not cry.
They were never meant to cry.

Being mere dolls, they could not feel.
They could be sad, but not feel sadness.
Sadness was unknowable to them. Even the death of a loved one. Even as their creator succumbed to disease, they felt nothing. As if their creator had just disappeared from the face of the earth.

One warm spring day, a stray cat approached and greeted them. Covered in scars, riddled with disease and thin as a rail, they took it in, and cared for it. "Ah, what a fuss." Their tender care rejuvenated it, and in time regained its health. From that day on, that cat became a fixture in their daily lives.
Every day, it would beg for food, affection, and praise. "Ah, what a fuss."

Winter's cold blew into the house as it staggered in from outside. With a weak meow, the cat's strength slipped, and it fell limply to the floor. The younger shook it again and again. The elder called for it repeatedly. But in the end, not a single cry, not a single response came. Something in the twins, something deep in their hearts, broke. And from that day on, they felt nothing at all.



Swordsmasher

■ Drakengard

A sword serrated like a saw, able to cut through enemy weapons. But with each use, vibrations shake the user's arm, causing the flesh to turn weak and translucent like wax.

Many, many centuries ago, there was a brave knight who fought and defeated countless enemies. But as he fought, his flesh became paler and paler.

Then came a war on which the fate of the kingdom hung in balance. The knight took the head of the enemy general and won the battle. But he had grown so pale as to be transparent.

As the soldiers celebrated the victory, a single arrow struck the knight through his heart. But none could see the invisible knight, and his death went noticed by none.

背信の刃
Blade of Treachery

■ Drakengard 2

The sword made of marble emits a fierce chill and quietly awaits its owner.

The legend told that the marble sword could freeze even its owner's age. It continues to wait patiently.

The marble sword continued to wait. So long it waited - long enough to freeze time.

The sword had waited for so long that surely even the warmth of human blood could not awaken it now. The only thing that could be said for sure is that the frozen face of its wielder would be reflected in its blade.

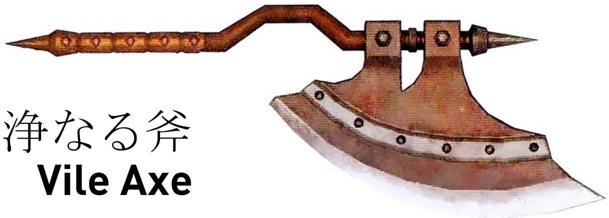
■ Drakengard

There were two sisters who were renowned as the greatest swordsmiths in the kingdom. No matter who challenged them, none could make a finer sword.

One day, a wandering bard visited their home. He sang with a voice so beautiful that the gods wept to hear it, and both sisters fell deeply in love with the kind and gallant skald.

Each of them sets about making the most magnificent sword, so that they might win his love. But their bitter rivalry led them to make only dull and brittle blades.

Seeing their discord, the skald offered to take both as his brides. With their rivalry ended, together the sisters crafted this magnificent sword and named it Skald's Song.



不浄なる斧
Vile Axe

■ NieR:Replicant / Gestalt

The girl merely stared at the scene before her. On her side, numerous cuts littered her father's body, and though dead, her mother was continuously raped by the soldiers. Her young brother who was born not long ago was thrown into the furnace, and his body burnt to a crisp. The soldiers who killed her three family members, merely stared at the girl while she cried.

A few years later, she set out for revenge. The first one was such a fat soldier that his military clothes were bursting at their seams. The girl approached him, and told him of a medicine that could make him lose weight. She told him that she has to give him a physical examination, and made him lie on a bed. Then she cut off his hands and feet with an axe. Without his limbs, the man could not even attempt an escape. You can get even thinner, the girl said and pressed down on him. Now you've become very slim, the girl whispered to the now round torso.

The second soldier was matchless in his lust for women. He called numerous women to his mansion every day, and spent the night with them. The girl killed all the women around him. She stood before the man possessed by terror, reduced to mumbled pleas for his life, and chopped off the symbol of his masculinity with her axe.

The third soldier retired from the army, and lived an easygoing life with his family in a village on the borders. While his family was sleeping, the girl put cracks into the house's pillars with her axe. Losing its support, the house crumbled, and the girl lit a fire upon it. The fire grew into enormous proportions. The son of the soldier, who suffered burns all over his body, escaped from the burning house. The son of the soldier merely stared at the girl who killed his entire family. The girl offered the son of the soldier her axe, and escaped into the darkness.

■ Drakengard

An ambitious wizard sealed a salamander within this axe. It became imbued with potent fire magic and even greater destructive power.

The salamander whispered to the magician: "Feed the axe blood...and we will become even stronger!" Bewitched by the power, the wizard began to seek victims to slay.

"Well? Shall you give us more blood?" so whispered the axe, its appetite for flesh growing. The wizard, intoxicated by the power, had no means to resist.

Not so long ago, the axe was discovered lying next to a withered mummy as dry as a petrified tree. Even now, the axe whispers to those drawn by the dark night. "Kill," it says...

■ Drakengard 2

A twisted magician sealed a fire lizard into this axe. It would whisper words of hatred for others, and drive its owner to madness.

A thief who stole this axe soon extended his territory to beyond the neighboring mountains, and became the chief of a large group of bandits.

A page who acquired this axe became an infamous soldier, and was made lieutenant in an order of knights.

In the end, however, the axe drove both the thief and the page to kill indiscriminately, and they were murdered by their own men.

Glory's Bane

■ Drakengard

This sword belonged to a royal family whose kingdom was destroyed by an evil dragon. The vengeful rage of the family smolders deep within the blade, hidden by the sword's gaudy beauty.

Whoever takes up the sword will suffer from the family's bitter curse. Evil dreams will haunt the victim's nights till he is overtaken by a baleful death.

A king of a certain small nation was struck by the sword's beauty and took it for his own. But he, too, became plagued by nightmares, and one day his life and kingdom were taken from him by dragons.

There is but one means to escape the sword's curse: Slay the same dragon that killed the royal family. But no man has yet possessed the strength to cheat fate and break the spell.

■ Drakengard 2

Once upon a time, on a warm spring day, an evil dragon attacked a palace. He killed the royal family, the palace guard, and even the court jester, just because he felt like it. Satisfied with his work, the dragon settled down for a nap in the throne room, and it was then that a little girl walked in, holding a sword. She shook the dragon awake.

She asked, "Could you tell me where the king is, please? I have to kill him." Rather taken back, the dragon replies, "I've already eaten him." Hearing this, the little girl bows politely and said "Thank you very much!" Puzzled by her appreciation, the dragon asked, "Why do you thank me, little girl?"

The girl replied, "The king you ate was not the true king. My dead mummy told me that he took the palace from my daddy. That's why I had to kill him – to get my palace back!" The little girl wasn't lying either. She really was the rightful heir t the throne.

The girl continued, "Now I'm Queen, I'm going to kill all the people who let my daddy die!" The dragon laughed and said," Very well, little Queen. Then I shall bestow my power upon you and your sword." So, they exchanged their beating hearts. Then the little girl took her sword, slaughtered everyone, and lived happily ever after.

Flamberge

■ Drakengard 2

The dragon faced certain death, he lamented: why had he tried to save the life of a wretched human child, only to fly straight into the trap of dragon hunters? With his consciousness fading, the dragon thought he saw a man fighting. When he awoke, the man was treating his wounds.

The man who saved the dragon's life aspired to become king. The dragon was not interested in such matters, but he thought that he would make a fine ruler. Suddenly, an arrow pierced the man's chest. The dragon hunters had called in reinforcements. Critically injured, he groaned and fell to his knees.

Struggling to his feet, the man fought back bravely, but his wound was slowing him down. Just as it seemed he was about to be overwhelmed; the sound of tearing flesh filled the air. The dragon had torn out its own tongue! When the man pierced the tongue with his sword, a wall of flame spilled out burning the dragon hunters to ash.

"I'd hate to sacrifice myself for a mere human, but I do not wish to live with your death on my conscience." Said the dragon, as he closed his eyes. At that moment, a bond that transcended species was forged. With Flamberge in his hand, the man later became king.

■ Drakengard

A sword whose name can also mean "fire." The rippled blade deepens wounds and makes them fatal. This was a common sword in days past.

In ancient times, a warrior and a dragon fought a battle. Seeing his sword melt in the dragon fire, the warrior tore out the dragon's tongue and wrapped it around his weapon's blade.

The enraged dragon blasted a mighty fireball at the warrior. So great was the conflagration that both warrior and dragon were reduced to ash. All that remained was the sword, untouched by the flames.

Since then, the sword has held special magic against the flames of dragons. But it is said that should an unworthy man try to wield it; he will be engulfed in a column of fire.

Caim's Sword

■ Drakengard

A gift to Caim from his beloved father. Since he was a young child, Caim had idolized his gentle father and longed to fight strongly and bravely in battle beside him.

But the dark shadow of the Empire fell over their peaceful kingdom. The Empire grew stronger and stronger, until one day, Caim's castle was attacked by Imperial black dragons.

"Caim! Take Furiae and flee!" ordered Caim's father. But even before Caim was able to answer, his parents were slain before his very eyes.

Clutching the sword that was a gift from his father, Caim swore upon it revenge for the loss of his kingdom and the murder of his parents. Even now, an unquenchable rage still fills his heart.

■ Drakengard 3

There once was an awkward prince who found love, politics, and even general interactions difficult. His only comfort was practicing swordplay in the courtyard.

After a hundred days of practice, he began to feel stronger. As this strength turned to confidence and washed away his anxieties, the prince devoted himself to mastering the sword.

After a thousand days of practice, he forgets the stress of politics and intrigue. Such things brought only lies and betrayal, but his sword never did.

After ten thousand days of practice, he realized his sword might free him from all stress if he entrusted everything to it. Alas, he was only running away from his problems...

■ Drakengard 2

Eighteen years ago, when the world faced destruction, a human and a dragon dared to fight the gods. In the end, the dragon gave her life to save the world. Left behind, the man wandered the desolate lands, his heart full of sorrow. Accompanying him on his journey was the very same girl who brought mankind to the brink of extinction.

Betraying the alliance, he's formed during the war, the old hierarch altered the seal to increase the dragon's burden. When the wandering man felt the dragon's agony, the girl sensed his distress and made her escape. Alone again, his mind was consumed by thoughts of vengeance and his hollow soul burned with bloodlust once more.

Caim hunted down the treacherous hierarch. Ignoring his pleas for mercy, he killed him with a single blow. However, Caim's efforts were in vain: the seal was permanently altered. The burden was tearing the dragon's mind apart, so the world's former savior faced a similar choice... But this time, Caim would choose the dragon over the world.

Caim and Angelus were finally reunited, when all the keys to the seal had been broken. Once more, the world faced destruction, but at least they were together – complete. They vowed then never to part again – a vow they kept until the end. After that, only Caim's sword remained in the doomed world.

Butcher's Joy

■ Drakengard

Juices oozing from tender, succulent flesh, the sweet aroma of fine herbs... The master cook made dishes of meat that none in the city could resist.

Every day, customers lined up outside his inn, waiting for their chance to partake. Even the king himself would sneak down from his castle to sample the master's art.

But once he entered his kitchen, the smiling cook's face would grow stern. The meat he used was no ordinary meat...

The years passed, and the cook and his inn disappeared from the town. But his cleaver remains as gleaming and sharp as ever, waiting for its next master.

Demonbane

■ Drakengard

This sword was forged as an instrument of revenge by a swordsmith whose family was slain by demons. It sucks in the souls of its victims to grow stronger and stronger.

The king commanded the skilled swordsmith to make a sword to behead demons. But as he struggled to craft the famous weapon, demons appeared at his home.

The demons, enraged that such a sword was being made and determined none should ever wield it, slaughtered the swordsmith's family and left him alive to weep over their bloody remains.

Burning with revenge, the swordsmith left the corpses where they lay and crafted the demon-slayer. But the madman who gripped the weapon was little more than a demon himself.

Greed's Reward

■ Drakengard

There was once a great merchant who sailed all the seven seas, discovering new lands and trading around the world. This merchant amassed a fortune beyond all compare.

One day, the merchant heard of an enchanted weapon known to some as the Dark Summoner. It was said that this sword was hidden in the ocean to the south--a land swallowed in ages past.

The merchant set out, resolved to find the rare and valuable sword. After many adventures and much hardship, he found it at last; the sword was impaled in the mouth of a demon's statue.

Suddenly bolts of hellfire flew from the sword, and the merchant's ship sank into the watery abyss. Weeks later, his corpse was washed up upon the shore, the scimitar clutched reproachfully in his hand.

Guardian's Sorrow

■ Drakengard

This sword once belonged to the guards of a holy sage. Though made simply and without ornament, the sword's blade never breaks nor bends, no matter how often it is swung in battle.

Fourteen boys and girls protected the holy sage, all of them orphans abandoned by their parents. They lived together with their master as a family.

One day, the party was set on by a gang of brigands. The guards fought a desperate battle, rising again from the most grievous wounds to guard the path to the sage's carriage.

At last, not one bandit nor guard was left alive. The weeping sage took the sword his guard had held and blessed it, so that it might protect others as his guards had protected him.

Injustice

■ Drakengard

A sword wielded as a symbol of justice by the successive heroes of a kingdom. The church of the land imbued it with powerful magic so that any who fought for justice would be blessed.

The first hero was a great general who smashed an invading army. He killed a score of enemies by his own hand.

The second hero was a great general who defended his country from a mutinous rebellion. He captured each and every one of the mutineers and, by his own hand, carried out their sentence of death.

The last hero was a general who invaded and colonized a foreign land. In this conquered country, he ordered the massacre of tens of thousands of innocent lives.

■ Drakengard 2

Generations of heroes carried this sword as the symbol of freedom. To carry this sword, and to win acclaim as heroes, they had to shed much blood.

With this sword in hand, the heroes invaded foreign lands in the name of freedom. Their soldiers looted the lands and many innocent people died.

The sword was later stolen by a bandit and sold to a warmongering general. Subsequently, he too invaded neighboring kingdoms is the name of freedom, his soldiers looted the lands, and many innocent people died.

After each war, the sword changed hands. To this day, no one could find a hero wielding in the name of freedom.

Balberith's Tears

■ Drakengard

Balberith is the demon who seals all pacts between devils and humans.
His evil contracts send ill-fortuned men and women one after the other into hell.

One time, Balberith fell in love with a human woman.
This woman's father was very sick, and she appealed to the demons to save her father.

But Balberith knew that with a contract, she would be thrown into hell and lost to him forever.
He thought and thought, and at last decided that he himself would go to hell in her place.

But when he hurried to the girl's home, he found the father dead; the girl's lifeless body lay beside him, as if in sleep. Ignorant of death, the demon tried to shake her awake, over and over again.

Balberith's Tears

■ Drakengard

There was once a great sect that boasted 246 shrines and centuries of devotion to the holy way. The continuation of the sect's sacred truth was entrusted to the great hierarch, 57th in the line.

The hierarch was a grave and frankly honest leader; upstanding as a child of the gods, he was a good and holy man. But at times, his honesty made him weak to the pressures of the secular world.

One day, the ruler of the kingdom and protector of the sect asked the holy leader, "Who is the more just, the gods or I?" The hierarch answered that the gods were, and the king became enraged.

The king decreed the sect a heresy, and in one stroke. the proud, centuries-old religion was snuffed out. The hierarch, seeing his entreaties be ignored, plunged this trident into his chest.

Mermaid's Feast

■ Drakengard

This monk's spade belonged to an ugly mermaid who lived on a solitary island in the southern ocean. With her fearsome songs, she would lure the islanders out to sea and feast upon their raw livers.

One day, a young man came to the island, seeking revenge on the mermaid for the slaying of his family. The man sliced off the mermaid's tail, leaving her on the brink of death.

Unable to swim, the mermaid despaired. Seeking forgiveness, she gave to the youth her beloved weapon and begged for the return of her tail in exchange.

But the youth knew that she would return to her wicked ways of terrorizing the islanders for the livers that gave her sustenance. With one thrust of her own spear, the pitiful creature was slain.

Ozymandias's Might

■ Drakengard 2

This holy spear would demand to know if its owner was worthy of becoming a ruler. It had been passed down by a generation of soldiers who desired to rule. Long ago, one such soldier – who sought to rule above all – held this spear.

The spear asked of its owner, "When should a ruler use force?" The soldier could not answer. He managed to conquer and rule a small kingdom with the power of the spear, but it was too weak to repel the invading army of a neighboring kingdom and fell within a decade.

As the soldier's kingdom collapsed, one of his generals escaped with the spear, the invading army hot at his heels. They caught up with him soon enough, but just as they surrounded him, the spear asked the general the same question. He answered, "There are seven circumstances. The first – "

Before he could finish, the spear enveloped his body in lightning and slaughtered all his assailants. Using the power of the spear, the general went on to become the emperor of a grand empire. It flourished for over one thousand years.

■ Drakengard

This monk's spade was owned by the ruler of the greatest empire of the age. Said to control lightning and slice through blackness, it was dedicated as a guardian weapon in the shrine of the gods.

A warrior famed for his courage plundered the weapon and set out to conquer the world. Summoning lightning and thunder to his aid, he brought nation after nation into his empire.

He sat at the center of a vast empire, but the vassal's states chafed under his rule and revolted against him. In the end, betrayed even by his own army, the warrior's empire collapsed.

He took refuge in a small castle. As the besieging army put the castle to the torch, he held the monk's spade at his side and, together with his favorite concubine, waited for death.

Stormgiver

■ Drakengard

There once was a nest of vampires that lived in an old castle deep in the forest. Each night, the vampires would creep out their lair and terrorize the helpless farmers of the nearby village.

Hearing of the villagers' plight, a renowned vampire slayer came to the village. But he told the villagers that he could not battle an entire nest of vampires alone.

Some young men of the village volunteered to help, and together they prepared four spears set with powerful crystals. That night, the vampires came shrieking from their lair and attacked the village as one.

The battle raged all night long. But when morning broke, all that remained of the vampires was gray ash. Ever since, the villagers have worshiped the spears as guardian spirits.

Wolf's Plague

■ Drakengard

There was once a small village that made its livelihood from rearing cattle. But it was terrorized by a pack of wolves that slaughtered the villagers' livestock each night.

Desperately, the villagers tried to protect their herds, but they were defenseless against the wily white wolf that led the pack. Each night, more livestock was lost.

As the situation grew graver, some began to talk of abandoning their homes. At that, the quietest villager of all took up his spear and stepped out into the night.

Two days later, the white wolf was found dead in the woods, impaled by the spear. The villagers raised the weapon over the village gate in hope that one day it might greet the silent one's return.

Victor's Spoils

■ Drakengard

There was once a country founded by two brothers, masters of martial arts. One brother fought with strength, the other with speed. Great friends, they ruled their country in peace.

One day, a small girl asked the two brothers an innocent question: "They say that the two of you have never fought. But if you were to have a fight, which one of you could win?"

Both answered that he himself would be the victor. Thereupon the brothers began to argue--an argument that grew more and more heated, until they found themselves in a fight to death.

Seeing the brother's battle, the angry gods hurled down this mighty spear and impaled them both. Awed by the gods' wrath, the people of the country enshrined the spear in their temple.

■ Drakengard 2

Once, there lived two princes. One studied the martial art of bravery, and the other studied the martial art of adaptability. The two trained constantly to refine each other's skills.

The brothers asked their master, "Which school is more effective?" The master handed a spear to the brothers.

Smiling, he explained, "A good spear has a hard, sharp blade and a staff as flexible as a willow. What matters is that the two schools fight together, not against each other."

The master eventually died of old age. The princes buried him with the spear that had taught them so much, cowing that they would work together for the rest of their lives. Their kingdom flourished.

Soldier's Sword

■ Drakengard

A sword forged using secret techniques known only to one family. The family's secret was jealously guarded, and no stranger was allowed to learn it.

Hoping to discover how the sword was made, a soldier from an enemy kingdom joined the family. His plan was to steal the secret and return it to his own country.

But the young soldier fell in love with the family's daughter, and he could not bear to part from her. He confessed his plot, and begged her to flee with him back to his country.

But when the daughter heard his scheme, she murdered the soldier and then took her own life. And so was the secret of the sword kept within the family.

■ Drakengard 2

This sword was forged by a tribe using a closely guarded secret technique. In order to maintain secrecy, a daughter of the tribe was forced to kill her lover, whom the elders suspected of spying for a neighboring tribe. She committed suicide soon after.

The tribe secrecy was maintained but it came at a high price. Paranoia gradually spread, and the tribe began to punish and torture its own. They blackmailed each other and soon, all order was lost.

The torture methods were cruel. Some died of having melted iron poured into their mouth, and others simply lost their minds from the trauma of the ordeal.

Then all trust was lost within the tribe, they began to murder one another, and in a matter of days they had wiped themselves out. And so, their technique remained a secret for all times, just as they had wished.

Scream

■ Drakengard

There was once a handsome young man who stole from village to village, seducing the maidens and promising his hand in marriage.

Captivated by his charm and beauty, the young women gave him their land, their gold, their livestock, and their hearts. But at one midsummer festival, his victims met and discovered the young man's frauds.

The incensed women vowed revenge. With the help of the King of the Faeries, they cast a cruise on the youth, dooming the suitor's still-living soul to be sealed within this sword.

Even now, from deep within the cold steel of the blade, you can hear the pitiful screams of the young man as he laments his callous crimes.

■ Drakengard 2

The young man lived to trick young girls. Gleefully he stole their hearts and wealth. But in time, the women he'd scorned banded together and sought the help of the faerie king, who sealed the young man's spirit in a sword. Trapped inside the cold blade, he came to regret his sins. Then time passed, the women grew old, and one by one they died.

With each woman's death, time, which had been halted, returned to the man who had never known old age within the blade. As it did so, his hatred for the women who had imprisoned him grew. When the last of the women died, the curse was finally broken, and he regained his physical form.

Once the young man's body had been restored, his desire knew no bounds. He tricked one woman after another, stole hearts and wealth – until one day, he met a beautiful young woman, and fell in love for the very first time. He gave her all his life and wealth, but she felt nothing for him, and left town with another man.

The young woman committed the same crime as the young man and, in time, the men she's scorned tried to seal her spirit into this sword. Just as they were about to cast the sealing spell, the young man pushed his beloved out of the way and took her place inside the blade, which was turned red by his passion.
There he remains.

Crimson Hood

■ Drakengard

Hundreds of years ago, there lived a noble robber who always wears a scarlet cloak. Unsure what to do with the wealth he pilfered from corrupt merchants, he melted it down to forge this axe.

He was pleased with how he had disposed of the merchants' ill-gotten loot. But as he became obsessed with making the axe even more gorgeous, he started to rob the innocent as well.

One day, he raided the mansion of the most powerful sorcerer in the kingdom, and was quickly caught by the wily wizard. The wizard urged the robber to return to his noble ways of old.

But the bewitched heart of the robber could not be swayed. The wizard cast a spell that sealed the robber in a brilliant red crystal, and he then set the crystal in the eye of the axe.

■ Drakengard 2

"Not enough! I haven't had enough!" The magician awoke with a start. The axe... had it spoke to him? Or had he been dreaming?

Since that night, the magician's face, recognized throughout the kingdom, slowly seemed to change. After several months, he began to resemble in an infamous thief who had terrorized the lands decades before.

The thief's soul had resided within the axe for years, waiting for the perfect moment to seize a new body. Though the magician tried to resist, the thief eventually conquered his mind and stole his life.

The nobles of the kingdom did not think to question what he did them. How could they have known that he was no longer his true self?

And so, they all met a disastrous end,
while the magician lived on...

Philosopher's Staff

■ Drakengard

There are several elements that determine one's own will. Conceptual objects, scientific facts, and empirical realities all play a role when considering any immediate question.

Hypothetically, in the regulation of judgment or in progress toward facts concerning the question, any thinker can acquire a rough estimate, or intuition, based on personal experience.

Alternatively, the process is under the control of reason; what selection to make, on what issue to focus, and so on. In other words, the methods of fact consideration, judgment, and reasoning.

Only those who understand the foregoing have the power to understand thought or sense, and recognize its worth in others and in themselves, thus achieving "true and justifiable belief."

■ Drakengard 2

The magician had no friend. It was not that he disliked people - quite the contrary – nor was he a bad person to be around (though he could be a little pedantic), yet anyone who met him seemed to hurry away as soon as they could. The poor man was at a loss to Understand why.

One day, the magician was struck by a mysterious illness. Fever high, heart pounding, limbs shaking, he could hardly walk. He tried casting spells, but when they didn't help, he took up his favorite staff and headed for the medicine man.

After a trying journey, he explained His conditions to the medicine man. "The various symptoms afflicting my corporeal form are quite beyond the treatment of a layman unversed in the science of diagnosis - even one so familiar with the arcane –" But before he could finish, the medicine man muttered something about being busy and fled.

Having failed to obtain any medicine, the magician's conditions worsened and he died.

If only he's realized that knowledge was not for flaunting, but for sharing in words that everyone could understand...

If only he's been aware of this simple truth... perhaps he wouldn't have died of food poisoning.

Hunter's Joy

■ Drakengard

In a certain country lived a feudal lord. This lord was enamored of the hunt; each day he rode out to find animals to slay, his favorite hunting sword by his side.

One evening, the animals of the forest gathered together in council. "We cannot survive much longer! We must kill the lord if we wish to live!"

So, the animals of the forest surrounded the lord's manor, seeking a way in. But when the lord saw them all, he danced with delight. "So, they have all gathered for the hunt!"

With joy coursing through his veins, the lord rode out and slaughtered all the animals until not one remained in the forest. By the by, the lord lived happily on to a ripe old age.

■ Drakengard 2

A lord with a penchant for hunting once owned this sword. With it at his side, he would ride out into the forest and not return until he had slaughtered all the animals he could find. Several decades later, when the lord's grandson inherited the title, he also inherited this sword.

The new lord was a gentle soul, and wasn't fond of hunting – until the day he found this sword among his grandfather's possessions. From then on, his interest grew and he began to make frequent hunting trips.

As the months passed, the young lord's behavior became more and more eccentric. He would lick the food off his plate and was sometimes seen walking on all fours around the castle. Then one day he disappeared.

No one knew what had become of him - only that a beastly roaring could be heard echoing from deep within the castle dungeons. It is said that it can still be heard to this day.

Takamasa

■ Drakengard

When I first met him, I found it hard to imagine that the irascible, smelly monk that stood before me was once the vassal of such a mighty lord.

Yet the gleaming sword that he held at his side suggested his tale might be true. What, under heaven, had happened to bring such knight so low?

He told me that he had grown tired of the feuds of the noble families. But it is a hard thing for any warrior to abandon the discipline of the way of the sword.

"At that time...things might have gone better," he said, looking thoughtfully into the sky. I suppose that now, in some place, he is coming near to the end of his path.

■ Drakengard 2

After a lengthy war, the warrior finally captured Takamasa from his enemy, a mere fugitive.

The fugitive's skills were no match for his own, but as soon as their swords crossed, the warrior's blade broke in two. Risking his life, the warrior allowed the fugitive to plunge Takamasa into his shoulder. Inching agonizingly down its blade, He advanced and stabbed his enemy to death with the broken sword.

"Let him cut my flesh and I shall break his bones." Takamasa responded well to the warrior's philosophy. Armed with the legendary blade, he became a renowned hero. One day, he was ordered to kill a demon with the strength of one hundred men and a body like steel.

Showing no sign of fear, the warrior approached the demon and challenged it to strike him. Laughing at this folly, it shattered his body with a single mighty punch - but even as it did so, Takamasa pierced its scaly throat, killing it instantly. "Let him break my bones, and I shall take his life." The warrior's spirit lived on inside the sword.

Slaughterism

■ Drakengard

This sword belonged to a demented painter who murdered innocents every night and collected their blood. With this grisly harvest, he painted masterpieces the likes of which the world had never seen.

The painter had a dream. He dreamt that one day he would create paintings so powerful that all who viewed them would be at peace. Each day he painted feverishly, chasing his dream.

But none cared for his work, and he began to feel the cold, uncaring stares of others. Eventually, the soul of the sensitive artist was broken.

"Red! Crimson! Scarlet!" In a frenzy, the artist embarked on a rampage of murder and creation. It did not end until he turned the sword on himself and forged his last masterpiece.

■ Drakengard 2

What has happened to me? Every time I wield this sword - every time I see blood pour out of my victim's neck – I'm overwhelmed with unspeakable joy. Crimson blood paints the street red. It stains my pale body scarlet. Its vivid hue is burned into my eyes and won't leave my mind... Blood, blood, blood, blood.

The blood gushes out with a happy splash!
When it's all gone, I'm sad, so I find new flesh and tear it up! It's best when it's warm, but I like it cold too! When it's dry, it's not so red, which isn't much fun, but it's still blood, so I still like it very, very much! Blood, blood, blood, blood !

BlOody, bLoOdY, BLooDY, bLOod!! CRiMsOn BLOOD!! BLoODy RED!! ReD, CrImSOn, SCaRLeT!!!

Wisdom

■ Drakengard

In a northern island country, there was a wise man trusted by all people. Known as the Man Who Can See a Thousand Leagues, he wandered the countryside with this staff in his hand.

The staff could cure diseases and injury in all those who touched it. When placed on the ground, it could make even the most barren lands fertile.

If the staff was touched to a person, it could tell if that person lied or told the truth. If the staff was touched to a wicked man, that man would fall on his knees and repent all his sins.

If the staff was touched to monsters, they would flee. And if the staff was touched to demons, with words forbidden by the gods, burn them to blackened ash.

■ Drakengard 2

During his journey south, a priest stopped off at a poor, nameless village far from civilization. Though he was famous for his wisdom, and could see for a thousand miles, he was just another traveler to the people of the remote settlement.

But nonetheless, the village gave the traveling priest a very warm welcome. Moved by their heartfelt hospitality, he presented them with a staff as a token of his appreciation.

The staff held miraculous powers. As the priest watched the villagers' faces light up at the gift, he prayed that their lives would be filled with happiness.

However, the villagers gave the staff to a traveler with a bad back. When the priest heard words of this, he realized that the villager's lives were already as happy as they could be. Their contentment was a greater gift than even his staff.

Magi's Sorrow

■ Drakengard

Far, far to the west was a land of magic, governed in peace by the five hundred wise magi of the Council.

In both night and day, the streets shone, and the people lived free of fear or hard labor. One day, the five-hundred-and-first magi were appointed to the Council.

He was only a child of ten, but so great were his powers and his intelligence, that within two years and fifteen days, he was made Leader of the Council.

A genius of magic, but also a boy of twelve. Fears assailed him, and bewildered by a life without meaning, he transformed himself into a crystal that would exist for all eternity.

■ Drakengard 2

The stone set in this staff possesses the soul of a gifted young magician. An ordinary human life did not interest this boy. In search of a higher spiritual place, he summoned all of his strength and turned himself into a stone, wishing to live in this world forever.

One day he learned that his owner was a beautiful stateswoman. He loved her so, but as time has passed she grew old and died. Even the streets and houses and trees that he loved inevitable grew old too and turned to dust. Sorrow consumed him

As a stone, the young magician could watch people's happiness as well as their misfortune. But like a stone, he could not share in their joy or lend them a helping hand. All he could do was mourn alone.

Will the boy ever be released from the burden of his rashly garnered immortality? Will time heal the wounds of an immortal to whom time is a stranger?
Or will you, perhaps, lead him into the light?

Edacious

■ Drakengard

This was the staff of a lean, thin wizard. His mean indifference and cold heart made him hated by the townspeople and his apprentices.

Growing fearful for his own life, the wizard used the black arts to form a staff with fearsome power—a power that drew its energy from the wizard's own life force.

As the staff gathered more and more energy to itself, the wizard grew thinner and weaker. But the wizard was intoxicated by the staff's power, and could not let go, no matter the cost.

Obsessed with protecting himself from his resentful apprentices, the wizard clutched the staff tight till he died. In the end, all that remained of him were brittle bones and dried, translucent skin.

■ Drakengard 2

This staff was created with the skin and bones of a gaunt magician. The magician was a famous man with many disciples. When he grew old, he asked his disciples to select one of their own numbers to be his successor.

One of the magician's disciples was a talented young man with eyes as sharp as an eagle. The old magician named him his successor, and taught him everything he knew. The young man mastered every known spell within half a year. Thrilled by his progress, the old magician asked him to help train other disciples.

During training, the young man began to invent new spells. Soon the other disciples began to train directly under him, rather than their former master. The old magician knew that his time passed, and asked him protege to take his place. But the young man refused. He said he wanted to travel the world and seek out new magic.

Stung by the young man's refusal, the magician's emotions, pent up until now, exploded... Jealousy. Hatred. Love... He unleashed every spell he knew, but the young man calmly reflected each of his curses back at him. Caught in a maelstrom of his own magic, the old man's flash melted leaving nothing but skins and bones.

Poisontongue

■ Drakengard

There was once a surgeon who saved many patients from sickness and death. Word of his skills spread, and so great did his renown grow that he was appointed physician to the king.

Several years passed. One day, the king's daughter fell gravely ill. Despite all the doctor's skill and efforts, the illness proved fatal, and the princess slipped into death.

A hateful grudge toward the doctor took root in the grieving king's heart. Deaf to the doctor's entreaties, the king sentenced the physician's family to death.

Mad with grief, the doctor threw deadly poison in the royal well, and the entire royal household died agonizing deaths. The blade of this axe was sharpened using water drawn from that well.

■ Drakengard 2

Long ago there was a vast kingdom surrounded with water end enclosed by mighty walls. Blessed with the gift of water, the people lived a life of happiness. An altar to the water goddess stood at the center of the kingdom. On it lay an axe, which radiated a calm blue light. Legends told that the goddess used the axe to slay the demon king of drought.

Beyond its walls, other nations schemed to steal the prosperous kingdom's wealth. Under the command of their king, the citizens fought bravely, but the peace-loving people of the water kingdom were no match for the invaders. Soon, their mighty walls lay in ruins and the war was on their doorstep.

When the flames of war reached the water goddess's altar, the axe came to life. Floating above its resting place, its blade gives off a blinding flash of light. The next moment, a tidal wave washed over the invading armies and continued past the kingdom's borders, drowning the land of the enemy.

Having served its purpose, the axe lost its luster and the waters subsided. Now, the ancient weapon looked as drained and lifeless as the desert.

Bonebreaker

■ Drakengard

This simple, common axe is made of a shaft hewn from plain oak and a head cast crudely from pig iron.

A simple, common old blacksmith made it at the beginning of the year to open the door of an old shed.

Inside the simple, common shed, the old man saw piled high before him the jumbled bones of more men than he could count. He told no one of his find.

This simple, common axe made by simple, common old blacksmith came to be called Bonebreaker.

Devilscale

■ Drakengard

In a time when gods and mankind still lived together on the earth, a great war raged between the gods and the demons. The nights burned red, and scores of gods fell victim to hellfire.

The conflagration burned for 10 days. Then a flood covered the earth for 100 days, and then for 1000 days great tempest swept the land. All plants and animals were turned to dust.

But at last the gods struck down Belial, master of the giants and the mightiest of the demons. They shut him up in his hell, sealing the entrance with layer upon layer of thick ice.

It is said that the blade of this pole axe is made from a scale of the demon Belial's hide, cut from him when the gods sealed him into his hell.

Apostate's Misery

■ Drakengard

There was once a wind spirit who fell in love with a mortal man. Though it was against all the laws of her race, each day she allowed her love and passion to grow.

The spirit was condemned to death for the betrayal of her race. The Lord of Spirits sent vassals to carry out the sentence, armed with a bardiche enchanted to slay spirits.

Sensing that her life was in danger, the spirit made one last visit to the man she loved, then fled through the forests and seas and mountains, pursued all the while by her would-be executioners.

Some years later, a healthy young boy was seen playing around the village. This remarkable boy could control the very winds. His father never told him who his mother was...

■ Drakengard 2

The young man was popular with everyone in the village. He had the ability to control the wind, and was often seen flying over rivers and valleys. He was a cheerful boy, though he always seemed to be troubled by something.

Several years later, his father passed away. Before he died, he told his son about the young man's mother, whom his son had learned never to mention in his presence.

"Go to the place marked on the map." said his father. As if guided by a spirit, the young man took up his scythe and left, carried by the wind. How long had he been traveling? Over the forests, oceans and mountain Ranges he flew. Exhausted and frail, He came at last to a village.

The chief of the village welcomed the young man and told him that the scythe he was carrying had once belonged to the village. Just then, a beautiful woman entered the room. The young man knew at once that she was his mother. From that day forth, he helped keep peace between humans and wind spirits. The scythe was never used again.

Reaper's Scythe

■ Drakengard

They say that the reaper waits by the gate to Hades. With this scythe he cuts the passage to the eternal darkness--a place from whence no soul has ever returned.

A man was sentenced to enter dark Hades. He waited beside the reaper as the grim god sliced open a passage to the darkness.

At that moment, the man swung his sword at the reaper! The blade struck home, and the reaper felled. "Foolish human," he laughed. "Your sword cannot help you now!"

As he spoke, the scythe rose up and cut off the man's leg with one blow. The true guardian was not the reaper; it was the scythe. And by the gate it still waits for each sinner in his turn.

Windsinger

■ Drakengard

This bardiche is imbued with the might anger of the storm god. Any victim that has the misfortune to be caught in the tempest will have his very flesh and blood blown clean off his bones.

In a small village, there lived a boy who could control the winds. Hearing of this, the jealous storm god came down to earth and challenged the boy to a duel of magic.

They agreed to see who would be first to remove a passing knight's cloak. While the god tried to blow a storm to tear the cloak away, the boy simply summoned a warm breeze that made the knight take off his cloak.

Enraged that he lost to a mere mortal, the storm god summoned a wind that blew so hard, nothing was left of the boy but his bones. At the same time, the storm of rage entered the knight's bardiche.

Carrion-maker

■ Drakengard

During the first moon, it smashed the legs of
a hundred men, women, and children.

During the second moon, it smashed the arms
of a hundred men, women, and children.

During the third moon, it smashed the heads
of a hundred men, women, and children.

During the fourth moon, nothing was left but a
lake of blood and a mace dripping with
liquefied flesh.

■ Drakengard 2

The iron club was placed at the corner of the torture chamber. After prisoners had been subject to every conceivable form of torture, it would make an appearance.

With their bodies in mutilated ruins, victims longed for the iron club's fatal blow, and an end to the pain.

From toothless mouths, they would wail, "The club! The club! Please, show me the club!" And, like a bloody angel, the iron club would come to answer their prayer.

The weapon turned its victim into meat with a single crushing blow, then waited in silence for the next prayer. Caked in flesh and blood, it came to resemble the bodies it violated.

Dragonstroke

■ Drakengard

This is a mace made from the scales of a dragon. In an age long before the founding of the Union and Empire, man lived in terror of the subhumans.

Tired of the oppression of the beasts, the people turned to a nameless young hero to throw off their yoke. To gain the strength he needed, the warrior resolved to enter a pact with a dragon.

He challenged the dragon repeatedly, and lost again and again. Though he eventually beat the dragon, the creature was already pact-beast to another and victory was in vain.

But in recompense, the dragon offered a piece of her own wing. Armed with the mace forged of dragon flesh, the warrior battled the subhumans and brought peace to mankind.

Holy Mace

■ Drakengard

This fanged ceremonial mace was presented to the hierarch of an ancient kingdom by his thirteen pupils. After the hierarch died, the nation broke down in chaos and strife.

The young pupils tried to stay true to their master's teachings and avoid bloodshed. But still, they fell one by one in the war, calling out helplessly for peace.

Abhorring violence to the end and still refusing to wield the mace, the final remaining pupil was killed in battle.

As the bloody mace fell, a great god weeping black tears descended from the heavens. He gathered the thirteen souls of the pupils, and in exchange, cursed the mace with a frightful power.

Iron Scraps

■ Drakengard

A village of serfs, suffering under their lord's corrupt government, cobbled together this mace to serve as a weapon in their rebellion. Its crooked frame was shaped by the blood of their toil.

No matter how they suffered, the lord would not grant the serf's relief. With cries for justice and freedom, they gathered into a crowd and marched against their overseer.

As dawn broke, the peasants charged into the castle. But there they found the lord living as impoverished a life as their own. For as much as the lord taxed the serfs, so was the lord taxed by the king.

The serfs took pity on their incompetent lord and cast aside their weapons. From then on, serf and lord lived in harmony, hungry and destitute, together.

Mage's Promise

■ Drakengard

There were once two bandit brothers whose infamy was known both near and far. With 200 men at their command, none dared stand against them. One autumn, they began to terrorize a mountain village.

The desperate villagers appealed to a traveling mage for help. The mage announced that he would help the villagers, but in exchange, he would require a village girl as his wife.

The mage then gave this mace to the brothers as a gift. No sooner had they accepted it than they began to fight. The whole gang took up arms, and in the end, not one bandit survived.

But instead of giving him his reward, the villagers slew the mage. Soon thereafter, an evil plague fell upon them and left not one soul alive. Only the cursed mace remained.

■ Drakengard 2

There once was a man, strong of limb, who lived in a poor village. A caring fellow, he decided to join the army and earn a better life for his fellow villagers. Grateful for his gesture, they presented him with a silver club before his departure.

To the kind-hearted man, the battlefield was hell itself. Stunned by the gruesome reality of war, he ran away before even swinging his club. Dejected, he returned to the village.

He returned to the village to find it burned down to the ground; his people massacred. Despairing, he cursed the heavens, cursed his weakness, and pleaded with the devil for more strength.

Back on the battlefield, he swung with the blind fury of a wild animal. In the end, he split his own head open with it, and only the cursed club remained.

Pupil's Club

■ Drakengard

This mace was made by an apprentice wizard with a single swing of a blacksmith's hammer. However, this apprentice could conjure little more than small flames.

As big as an ogre with an appetite to match, the apprentice did not look much like a sorcerer, and he found himself bullied by his master and fellow apprentices.

One day, he and another apprentice began a violent argument that did not end until the giant wizard lost his senses, swung his mace, and struck his colleague dead.

As it tasted blood, the mace absorbed the fallen apprentice's magical powers. The pupil realized that he could make the weapon even stronger... so he slew his master with a blow to the head.

Skull Banquet

■ Drakengard

A mace that belonged to a priest who gave his soul to demons. When his cult was still young, the demons spoke to him, commanding that he gather fresh souls.

The priest offered sacrifice after sacrifice to the demons, crushing each victim's head in turn. The mace brought his ambitions closer to his grasp.

As the cult grew, so did the mound of crushed skulls. But then the skulls shifted and transformed, turning into the face of a man the priest knew all too well.

The face was the priest's own. He had paid the ultimate price, and was turned into a demon. He rose and bid farewell to his earthly body.

Sorrow's Companion

■ Drakengard

The mace owned by a warrior-monk who was charged with fighting pirates. When he sailed the seas with his son at his side, no pirate could feel safe.

One day, they encountered a gang of pirates led by a wizard. The wizard summoned a sea dragon to fight by his side, and during the fierce battle that ensued, the monk's son was slain.

Rendered mad by the loss, the monk slaughtered the pirates and the dragon. But no matter how much he raged, he could not bring back his beloved son, and the monk soon died of grief.

Eventually, the sad tears of the monk reached the merciful god of the sea. In sympathy, the god took the monk's mace and made it powerful with magic and the talons of his own claws.

Spiked Wisdom

■ Drakengard

A philosopher was troubled by the ancient question: What is man? From whence is man born, and to what purpose?

Did the gods place him here in this world? The philosopher brooded on the question, his eyes cast skyward for the answers. Amidst all of creation, surely mankind had a special purpose?

Then the philosopher came a realization. Amongst creation, amongst the stars, the sun, and the moon, only man has the power to destroy. Proudly, the philosopher announced his discovery.

In the philosopher's audience, a single old man laughed. He took out a great mace and placed it before him. "Right," he said, "so this is the meaning of life?"

Dragonstorm

■ Drakengard

Due to the scheming of vassals, an unwilling princess was sent to be married in a neighboring land. On the way to the wedding, her caravan was set upon a gang of thieves hired to kill her.

Against the determined brigands, the princess's guards had no defense. But as the death blow was about to be struck, a guard sacrificed his own life and summoned a storm dragon.

By the time the storm dragon had slain all the bandits, the guard had breathed his last. The dragon imbued this hammer with his own strength and the soul of the soldier who had created him.

Then, in accordance with the soldier's dying wish, the princess bore the hammer with her into battle, wreaking dread revenge on her treacherous vassals.

Souldouser

■ Drakengard

A fearsome hammer that has the power to steal memories. With each blow of the weapon, the victim loses more of himself till he forgets his own identity.

One day, a soldier who carried the burden of a sorrowful past acquired the hammer. He began to strike himself in the head so that one by one, his memories began to disappear.

But as each unhappy memory was extinguished, an earlier one welled up in its place: Deaths of his comrades... The unhappy decision to become a soldier... The murder of his parents...

When at last all the sad thoughts were gone, and only the memories of a child full of hope and promise remained, it was too late. The soldier's skull was broken, and he felt over dead.

Treasure Builder

■ Drakengard

There was once a man who built beautiful buildings that became treasures of his kingdom. So many treasures did he create, people came to say that his hammer was a tool of the gods.

But one day, a war broke out between his country and its neighbor. All the men of his kingdom were called to join the army, and the builder was no exception.

The man who hated destruction was no warrior. During the war, the architect was killed, and the beautiful towns and buildings he created were reduced to mere broken rock.

Until the moment of his death, the builder did not once take another man's life. Will the next owner of the "hammer of the gods" be a lover of creation or destruction?

Tyrant's Hammer

■ Drakengard

In a land ruled by a gang of demons, ten young idealists resolved to take up this weapon and rise against the evil overseers. But not one of the cowed citizenries rose to fight with them.

The human rebels were nonetheless victorious; the demons were vanquished. As the rebels rebuilt the government, all agreed the weapon they used was imbued with the power of god.

But the young leaders began to forget their ideal world without fear. With secret informers and public executions, their rule turned into one of terror and tyranny.

The people rose up against them. The ten were arrested and sentenced to public execution. Once again, the people would witness the power of the weapon that had chased away the demons.

Sorrowborn

■ Drakengard

Once upon a time in a small village, a young boy and a young girl fell in love. The boy was kind and just, and the girl was cheerful and bright.

By the flowing stream, over the hills, and through the field they played. With a crown of day flowers and a ring of lavender, they promised themselves to each other for all eternity.

But one day, the girl's family was forced to leave the village to look for work in the city. Though she cried and begged to stay, the young girl had to leave.

The tears of the boy and girl fell to the ground and formed a small pond. This bardiche was crafted by the spirit who came to live in that lake, and was given on a whim to the local woodcutter.

■ Drakengard 2

There was a small pond near a small village. This pond was said to have been created by the tears of young lovers torn apart. One such lover, a boy left behind in the village when his lover’s family moved away, longed to see the one he sighed for just once more

One day a spirit of the pond appeared before the boy, and made a wager. If the boy could bring back some spiderwort that only grows in the far northwest mountains, it would bring the girl back. The boy left the village in search of the spiderwort and found a village in the northern lands. There, he also found his lost lover.

Reunited, the two lovers shed tears of joy. Sitting together in the small village, next to the small river, they talked until the sun set and made a solemn vow to marry each other. As night fell, the boy smiled Contentedly, his dreams fulfilled. But it was only an illusion created by the treacherous fog of the forest. The boy died, alone in the darkness.

The spirit of the pond mourned for the boy’s unrequited love. It sealed the lovers’ tears into this spear, praying for their happiness in the afterlife.

Executioner's Song

■ Drakengard

An axe used on the executioner's block of imperial prison. Forged as an executioner's tool, the axe has severed the heads of more than a thousand victims.

But after it was used to decapitate the very man who forged it, the axe became like a living thing. It seemed to be searching for something as it looped off each head in turn.

Once, a popular general was condemned to death. The people watched as he lay his head on the block and the axe did its bloody work. A headless corpse knows neither innocence nor guilt.

Hundreds of years have passed, and still the axe continues its grim search. Scores of rulers and kings have fallen beneath its blade as it wends its bloody way through the pages of history.

■ Drakengard 2

The axe thought to itself, "How many heads have I cut off?" Over the many years it had executed criminals, traitors, revolutionaries, politicians, even innocent, but it could not remember any of their faces, save for one—a peculiar boy.

The boy showed no fear as he placed his head on the block. Even the bravest men harbor a desperate hope at the moment of their death. The axe could feel the rush of their emotions even as it took their life.

Not this boy – he was different. His spirit was filled to the brim with hope. It wasn't the false hope of a devout believer, but rather, the knowledge that he was there by choice. His spirit was so pure that it made the axe want to scream.

The boy's execution was carried out. Among the crowd that gathered to witness the event, a group of young men shed tears. The axe did not understand what it meant. All it knew was that the young men would speak of the boy's high hopes for the world's future for generations to come.

Nowe's Long Sword

■ Drakengard 2

A gift from the previous general. Nowe received this sword on the day he joined the knights as a trainee. Since taking him in from the wild, General Oror had been Nowe's human father, teaching him the ways of men.

Oror was a strong and generous man whose skills with the sword was without equal. He was Nowe's hero. Mocked by some as a wild beast, Nowe dreamed of one day becoming as strong and generous a human being as his adoptive father. Cherishing that dream, he trained every day with his sword and lived the life of a knight.

During Nowe's first battle, Oror saved his life. The cruel reality of war, all noise and blood and death were too much for the young Nowe to take in. He stood transfixed frozen with fear. Seeing this, Oror rushed to his son's side and commanded Nowe to listen carefully to his words.

"The sword takes life, but it also saves the lives of your friends. What matters is the will of the one who holds the sword." So... would Nowe use this sword to Take life or save it? Neither the sword nor Oror could answer that question.

Silver Butterfly

■ Drakengard 2

A lady was married off at a young Age to a count in a nearby land. She was blessed with a kind husband and servants, but her life was a bore. She confided her malcontent to her husband, who suggested that she go on a journey. There were many things she needed to learn as a countess, he said. She appreciated her husband's understanding.

She heard many riveting tales From other travelers. There were Stories of farmers whose lives changed with the seasons; of children surviving without their parents; of the betrayal and treachery of kings in foreign lands. After two eventful years on the road, the countess began the voyage home as she had promised.

When she returned, the countess found her husband confused and weak. The mansion was in ruins, deserted apart from her husband and his favorite servant. Suddenly she realized that her journey had been the servant's idea, a part of his scheme to take over the estate. "But surely a loving wife would notice such a plot?" he smirked.

The servant was arrested and executed, but the count never regained his health. He died quietly, leaving the devastated countess to mourn. She had his body cremated, and his ashes encased in a large sword. The butterfly engraved on the blasé was based on a mask the countess had brought as a gift for her husband during her travels.

Union

■ Drakengard 2

In his instructions to the royal swordsmith, the king demanded that his new sword should combine the fang of a behemoth, the beak of a gryphon, the talon of a dragon, and iron from the eastern lands. Though he knew the task would be long and arduous, the faithful smith vowed to make the weapon and set out to find the materials right away.

Clearly, the smith needed help, but no traveling companion could be found. Nor was it any surprise that no one rose to the challenge; it was because the kingdom was weak that the king had searched the library to find a sword powerful enough to protect his subjects. This was no mere whim, the smith knew – he had to find a way.

So, the swordsmith traveled alone, But two months passed without any progress. Navigating the monster-infested wilderness was proving to be difficult and he was close to despair. It was then that a hero of the time happened to pass by, and, after listening to the smith's tale, he agreed to lend a much-needed hand. The two fought on together.

After countless adventure, the faithful smith forged the king's sword. Sadly, it did not possess as much power as the kind had hoped, but he was still elated with it. Using the power of the sword, the king kept the monsters at bay and continued to rule the land. The smith was duly knighted and served his king for many happy years.

Calf-Carver

■ Drakengard 2

There once was an extremely valiant and intelligent general. Tales of his bravery spread far and wide, and the streets echoed with his name.

The king felt threatened by his general's popularity. He arrested the general without reason, and threw him into a dungeon deep inside the castle. The dungeon was known to drive its captive insane within three days.

Three years later, the king visited the dungeon. There he saw the general, both of his legs rotted away, glaring back at him with unchanged intensity. The general's stare enraged the king, and, wondering why he hadn't done so three years before, he drew his sword and prepared to deal the finishing blow.

Just before the point of the king's sword could pierce the general's heart, he produced a sword from the pile of rags behind him and stabbed the tyrant, killing him instantly. He had fashioned the sword from the bones of his own legs, which he had amputated for the purpose. The general went on to become a noble and just king.

Bloody Fang

■ Drakengard 2

The swordsmith longed to create a perfect sword – a sword that would tear through a limb with one slash, and impale organs with a single thrust. A sword that would make its victims suffer right up to their dying breath.

In search of the cruelest of agonies, the swordsmith worked night and day. After months of toil, it was complete – a sword that would deal unending pain to its victims. All that remained was to test its abilities.

The swordsmith took the weapon to his king, and told him that even the most courageous man would tell its wielder anything he wanted to know. When the king tested his claim, he found the sword smith's words to be true: prisoners divulged their secrets without hesitation.

Elated with the sword, the king demanded to know how it was forged, but the swordsmith refused to reveal his methods, fearing his masterpiece would be copied. As a result, he got to experience his work first hand. He shed tears of joy at the quality of his creation.

Guard's Sword

■ Drakengard 2

The man who wielded this sword used to belong to the Knights of the Seal. His rank placed him directly above the one they called "dragon child."

The knight challenged the dragon child to a duel, scheming to halt the young knight's stratospheric rise through the ranks and earn himself a reputation in the bargain. However, the dragon child easily defeated the knight. Humiliated, he trained night and day and won promotion to platoon commander.

While he was on duty with his platoon, a traitor known as "the one-eyed man" attacked them and massacred half of their numbers without breaking a sweat. Terrified, the knight fled from the battle, abandoning his friends to their fate.

He could never return to the order after deserting them in their time of need. Stripped of his rank, and having even lost his sword, he wandered into the wilderness and was never seen again.

Sealblade: Calamitous Verse

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

So, the power of the seal negated the power of the gods? ...And the seal derived its power from the goddess? ...and this master blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into some kind of weapon?

A trainee blacksmith heard these rumors, and decided he could make a tidy profit if he made a weapon like the one in the legends.

After many months of hard work, the blacksmith finally completed the weapon, but no one knows what became of him after that. Some said he had been attacked by a thief who desired the sword, others said it was the curse of the goddess, but no one knew for sure.

Inuart's Long Sword

■ Drakengard 2

In solitary confinement somewhere in the desert, a man was tied to a stake. He had fought to protect the one he loved, but lacked the strength to save her, and stood on the brink of despair. He could remember her smile... but her smiles were directed at her brother.

Drifting in and out of consciousness, he was about to accept his fate when a girl appeared before him. Her eyes were a deep crimson and glistened like rubies. She smiled like the pretty little girl that she was, but spoke in a strange voice... It was the voice of neither a child nor an adult.

"If only I had the strength..." Her crimson eyes peered into the weak man's mind. He became the girl's servant. Beyond that, he could not remember... The only thing he could remember is his beloved killing herself in front of him... Then, standing before the Seeds of Destruction.

Eighteen years later... The man's long sword now belonged to a boy raised by a dragon. The sword was used to fight his lover's brother, the one-eyed man. Standing beside the boy was the girl with crimson eyes, now a grown woman. Their tale of life, death, and tangled relations was told for generations.

Evil's Bronze Blade

■ Drakengard 2

In ancient times, there was a realm ruled under magic.

The realm performed a ceremony each year to restore the magical protection. There a shrine maiden would dance with this bronze blade.

The bronze blade glowed with more radiance each year. A haunting purple light emanated from it whenever the shrine maiden danced. Strangely, the maiden's beauty did not fade with years, but rather, it intensified with age.

The princess of the realm wondered if the bronze blade was the secret of the shrine maiden's preservation. In a fit of jealousy, she took the blade for herself and killed the maiden. And so, the princess gained everlasting beauty. But without the maiden's magical protection, the land faded within a year, and the princess took her own life.

Moonlit Beauty

■ Drakengard 2

Once upon a time, there lived a pedigreed gentleman whose excellence with the sword had won him as many duels as his handsome face had the hearts of the young ladies.

One night, during an evening walk, he came upon the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, standing in the moonlight beside a lake.

Lost in her beauty, he stood there entranced and time seemed to him to stand still. Then suddenly, the woman let out a gasp and cried: "Why!?" Her beautiful bosom was stained red with blood. Following her horrified gaze, the gentleman saw that his own sword was buried to the hilt in her chest.

The lake reflected the gentleman's smiling face. In his ears, he heard the echoes of his own voice whisper, "Now there is no one fairer than you in this world." The next day, the gentleman's body was found next to the lake. He had pierced his own heart with his sword.

Sealaxe: Calamitous Rhythm

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess... So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

She was a legendary goddess who held the seeds within her body and saved mankind from ruin.

Sealed inside was time, the conqueror of space and all dimensions.

Oror's Falconblade

■ Drakengard 2

Once, one of Sir Gismor's men was caught attempting to steal General Oror's sword. When he was brought before his master, Sir Gismor harshly reprimanded the knight, and threatened to execute him. The knight pleaded, "I only wished to be more like General Oror." When Oror heard this, he interrupted Sir Gismor, and began to speak...

"This sword was crafted after the elfin myth of two brothers who become the gods of destruction.
The older one was called Falcon, and possessed the gift of knowledge. The younger one was called Lion, and possesses the gift of might. They fought in a war between humans and elves."

"Using their gifts, Falcon and Lion brought mankind to its knees. But with the end of the war, there was no one left to test their skills against, so they continued their quest for knowledge and power. Eventually, Falcon gained the knowledge of the universe and Lion cracked open the earth and sky with his fists."

"The brothers had become the gods of destruction, and the elves had no choice but to seal them in "Hero's Time", using the lives and souls of millions. Your crime is the same as the brothers'. But in the name of my sword, Gismor, I beg you: spare this man." And so, the knight was spared. But I never forgot the darkness I saw in Gismor's eyes that day.

Sealknife: Calamitous Strings

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess...So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

The goddess lived for her love. She gave her body for the sake of her beloved. She was a fiery goddess.

Sealed inside was the fire, the spirit that nurtures the life of the red earth...

Nowe's Sword

■ Drakengard 2

This sword belonged to a hero called Iron Dragon of the Two Swords. It was a gift from a female knight who trained him for his first battle. It saved the lives of many, including the Iron Dragon. He cherished it as though it was his own body.

One day, Iron Dragon entered hidden land, led by a priest's divine guidance. There, he met a dragon who spoke the words of men and a child who spoke the words of dragons. Iron Dragon knew right away that this must be the legendary savior, and asked for custody of the boy. But the dragon sneered...

"What right have you to take this child from his father? What could you possibly offer him?" And Iron Dragon replied, "I shall become the child's father. Without knowledge of human ways, this child would grow to become a wingless dragon – a pointless creature. I vow to raise him to be a fine knight. So, it is a future that I offer to the child".

Amused the dragon said, "Fine. You shall take the child, but I shall come with him, for only I can teach him the ways of dragons." Iron Dragon agreed, and presented his sword as a token of his pledge. The dragon sneered at the foolish human gesture, and threw the sword into his lair--the only world his child had ever known until then.

Oror's Lionblade

■ Drakengard 2

Violence. Death. Ruin. Eighteen years ago, Oror was a general in the army of the Union, and led his forces against the armies of the Empire. During one fateful battle, a catastrophe befell the world and lightning rained down from the skies killing Oror's men where they stood.

Loss. Starvation. Disease. The heroes saved the world from chaos and the war ended quickly, but the wounds caused by catastrophe were felt by mankind for many years to come. During that time, Oror traveled the world trying to bring hope to the people. Their pitiful plight broke his heart.

Flags. Armor. Spears. Oror had learned that the heroes had formed a band of knight, sealed the "fire", and were now working to save the needy. Knowing that he could not save humanity alone, Oror willingly joined the knight. With knights under his command, he dedicated his life to saving as many people as possible.

Death. Love. Hate. Caught up in the internal politics of the heroes, Oror lost his life. Gismor was the culprit. However, Oror did not hate him for his crime. His love for humanity would not permit such hatred, ever for his murder. And so Oror remained true to his way of life, until death.

Pitch Black

■ Drakengard 2

There once lived a man to whom killing was as essential to life as breathing. There was no special reason why he murdered. He was not driven by bloodlust. It was only that murder was all he knew.

One day, he encountered a group of thugs who had surrounded a helpless girl. As usual, he murdered every last one them without hesitation.

When he turned to kill the girl, he found her thanking him with tears in her eyes. It was the first time that anyone had ever thanked him for what he had done. As he looked at her, he finally realized that his actions had meaning and purpose.

Smiling, with happiness in his heart, he brought his sword down on the young girl's head. With kindness in his eyes, he paused for a moment to watch the pool of blood expanding around her crumpled form, before leaving the scene feeling greatly fulfilled.

Thunder Lord

■ Drakengard 3

Once there was a hellish wasteland covered by thundering skies. It changed hands countless times, and its people were tormented by unending hunger and merciless lightning.

One day, a valiant young baron swore to conquer the land and turn it into a place of bounty. Few of his exhausted subjects believed him. Some even laughed openly.

The baron had forged a fine sword of silver, then ordered a group of virgins to pray for three days and nights. Atop a hill, he raised the sword high, then thrust it into the ground.

After a stormy night, the sky cleared. The young baron was gone, and a fruit tree stood on the hill with the silver sword entangled in its branches. It still rumbles to this day.

Savior Blade

■ Drakengard 2

Once upon a time, a land faced Destruction due to the deception that corrupted people's heart.

Mourning the state of his realm, the king passed a new law sentencing to death anyone who spread false hope among his people, with lies that the country was being rebuilt.

It was then that a merchant appeared before the king with a sword that only killed liars. The king rejoiced, and paid a good sum of gold to purchase the sword.

Eager to test his miraculous acquisition, the king swung the sword at the merchant and clove him clean in two. The king mourned once again...

Thief's Secret

■ Drakengard 2

Many years ago, there was a mighty gang of bandits, who made their living by doing dirty deeds for the rich and powerful. One of the founding members was a man named Left Eye. He was a valued lieutenant who specialized in intelligence gathering and other clandestine undertakings.

Left Eye did not participate in battle. No one ever saw him draw his sword. It was a magic sword that brought riches to its owner. And Left Eye was indeed affluent. Being a lieutenant with unique talents, he was paid handsomely for his work and had amassed a sizable fortune over the years.

One day, some of the younger bandits surrounded Left Eye. They told him that they were unhappy about the size of his share compared to theirs. In truth, however, they were after more than just their fair share; they were after old Left Eye's fortune. Reading their intentions, Left Eye finally drew his sword...

Gone was the reserved man they all knew. Standing in his place, a bandit as fearsome as the ruthless young man who had founded the gang year before. It was over in a second. Left Eye walked away from the youngsters' bodies and told his old friend that he was leaving. Though they begged him to stay, he Disappeared into the desert.

Captured Goddess

■ Drakengard 2

A long, long time ago... A young girl regained consciousness in a small, dark space, thick with the stench of blood. She couldn't move her arms, her legs, or even her mouth. The only thing she could do was stare into the darkness with wide open eyes.

The last light the girl had seen was the fire that burned with people as its fuel. Its awful glow had illuminated the hand crawling all over her... After that, she had felt something cold pierce her body many, many times. And then... blackness. That was all she could remember. "What am I...?"

Suddenly the girl was freed from the darkness. The starry sky opened before her dazzled view, its faint light too bright. Desperately, she moved her eyes, searching to see herself, but the familiar lines of her body were gone; in their place, a ruined mass of blood and quivering flesh.

The girl let out a voiceless scream. as she did so, a black shadow obscured the stars. A monster with long fangs was kneeling over her, lowering its gruesome maw towards her face. In a moment of white agony, her ruined flesh contorted into a sword and lunged at the monster's head, stabbing it between the eyes.

Sins of the Fallen

■ Drakengard 3

Research Report 1. We focused on psychological and religious research in our quest to conjure angels and express the divinity within us. But now we have a different hypothesis.

Research Report 2. I refer to calling forth angels from nothing, without a host. This "forced summoning" theory suggests angels exist on a different existential plane.

Research Report 3. If transforming into an angel simply exchanging a life form from this world with one from another, could we summon them without a suitable corpus on this side?

Research Report 4. To perform such a summoning, I must summon "myself" from another plane while keeping my body here. Such power would make me the greatest [record ends].

Hero's Knife

■ Drakengard 2

A couple was elated by the news that they were to have a child. As this was their first, their friends held a feast the next day to celebrate. Many came to the party - among them, a prophet dressed in a richly embroidered clerical gown.

The prophet presented the couple with a short sword, and said, "This blade will make a master swordsman of the wielder. Use it to protect your children." When the husband grasped its hilt, he felt its power coursing through his body, making him stronger. This was no ordinary sword.

"The child who will be born is a child of heaven. The child who will be born is child of man. Should the child bring disaster upon mankind, kill it with this sword." The couple's faces paled, and the husband raised the sword to strike the prophet, but he had already disappeared.

After the day of the feast, the wife unable to forget the prophet's words, grew ever gloomier. The husband used the power of the sword to become a soldier and returned home ever more infrequently. Eventually, their child was born - or rather, a pair of twins was born: a beautiful boy and girl.

Tower of Warning

■ Drakengard 2

This spear belonged to a gentle and mild-mannered man. He lived in shame for a certain antisocial tendency, so he avoided the company of strangers, and lived deep inside the forest with his brothers.

He led a quiet life until one day, the Empire attacked his land, slaughtered his brothers, and torched his house. In despair, he tried to commit suicide. But just as he was about to die, a malicious faerie came to him and forced him into a pact, saving his life.

As the price of his pact, he lost his sight. But with his newfound power, he revolted against the Imperial forces and fought to save the world from the tyranny of the Empire.

Alongside the voiceless savior, he prevented the end on the world. Though he was now a hero, his shameful tendencies remained, so he returned to his life of solitude, a vilified exile.

Sealblade: Calamitous Melody

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess... So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

She was a goddess whose heart concealed a forbidden love. She was a pure goddess.

Sealed inside was life.

Sealspear: Calamitous Dance

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess...So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

The goddess was a noble knight, determined to carry out her mission. She was a noble goddess.

Sealed inside was light, the power to illuminate.

Imperial Tears

■ Drakengard 3

The fertile land was fought over time and again, spawning mountains of corpses. The young lord, who had watched the previous king die, gave an order: "Burn it to the ground."

No nobleman or peasant opposed him. The fires were set. The green trees burned. The animals scattered. And the land the previous king had sworn to save was reduced to ash.

When the flames finally died, the land was sealed and declared an eternal neutral zone. Over decades, it regained its beauty, but a single spear still resided deep within.

It was once a sword, obtained by the king who had sworn to protect the land. But it was forged again into a spear by his ruinous successor, and was now rusted beyond recognition. What became of this once promising land? None can say.

Hanch's Spear

■ Drakengard 2

The chaser in the fortress city to the west was a master of his craft. The nobles had him decorate their armor. However, he wouldn't let anyone into his shop, and went out at night without telling a soul where he was going. In time, his wife grew suspicious and tried to follow him, but lost him in a cemetery near the outskirts of the city.

One night, the chaser's wife decided to wait for her husband in the cemetery. Sure enough, the chaser arrived soon afterward and began to dig up a freshly buried coffin. Horrified, his wife ran away without saying a word. Once she'd collected her thoughts, she decided that it was high time she had a look inside her husband's shop.

What was there were corpses dressed in armor and matching accessories, and her husband dancing naked among them. The chaser had brought back dead bodies and clothed them in his richly decorated creations.

Maddened by disgust and despair, she lunged at her husband, impaling herself and him on a spear held by one of the grotesque mannequins. Several days later, the couple was discovered, skewered together, and surrounded by corpses. The offending spear, notable for its exquisite chasing, eventually found its way into the hands of Hanch.

Eris's Spear

■ Drakengard 2

Once, there was a man called the Iron Dragon of the Two Swords, famed for his dignity and countless acts of heroism. The owner of this spear was a female knight who trained him. Whether because of its uncommon quality or because of it as a gift from Iron Dragon, she always left for battle with this spear in her hands.

During a mission she faced a terrible choice. Ordered to retreat, she stood between countless enemy troops, and a defenseless village. Ignoring her orders, she stayed and fought to death. The enemy paraded her violated remains, then burned the village to ash, while her former allies sullied her name with the charge of subordination.

When the Iron Dragon found out what had happened, he charged into enemy territory and retrieved his beloved mentor's remains and her spear. Cradling her broken body in his arms, he swore to win back her good name, to become as noble a knight as she had been, and to raise knights who would give their lives to protect the people.

Eris inherited the spear, a memento of these two noble heroes. One can only wonder about what she thinks and for whom she fights, but the fallen knights can rest in peace knowing that their magnanimity of spirit lives on in her.

Falcon's Pinion

■ Drakengard 2

I awoke on a rainy day and looked up to see my brothers still in the nest from whence I'd fallen. It was a small nest, and I'd guessed that it would only be a matter of time before something like this happened. I was only two months old. "Well, that's life," I thought, just as my parents flew back. They looked down at me, but they began to feed my brothers.

I tried chirping, but they ignored me. "That's it for me, I suppose." I thought, when a lightning bolt struck the tree, setting it alight. I flapped my wings in a desperate attempt to get away. Once I'd scrabbled to a safe distance, I turned to see the nest in flames, my brothers' burning bodies illuminating the forest.

You can never tell what's going to happen in life. Cowering there in the wet grass, a human who'd come to investigate the fire saw me and scooped me up. One year later, I was an adult falcon and sat on his arm. He was middle-aged, poor, and drank a lot. That was all I knew about my savior.

After two years together, we parted ways when my companion sold me to buy alcohol. The human who brought me butchered, cooked, and served me to another human whose belly I paused in en route to the privy. My feathers were used to decorate a spear that was sold to a fool at an exorbitant price. What a ridiculous waste of money and life.

Manah's Staff

■ Drakengard 2

Eighteen years ago... The girl stood alone in the dark forest. Abandoned by her mother, her longing to be loved soon turned into madness. The gods, charmed by her insanity, chose her as a tool to rule the world. Her eyes began to glow red in the darkness.

The girl with crimson eyes sent the world spiraling into chaos. The sight of the world collapsing soothed her. But the order was restored by a silent man with a sword. He took her on a journey to atone for her sins. Though she tried to look away, he forced her to face the suffering she has caused.

One day the man looked up to the sky and hatred filled his eyes. The girl wondered what had happened to make her captor so angry. Spying her opportunity, she stabbed with a knife she had hidden in her robe and threw herself into a nearby gorge...

Several years later, the girl had lost all memory of her crimes and lived in a poor village. She learned about the Knights of the Seal, who oppressed the villagers. In a strange twist of fate, the girl who brought chaos to the world took up this staff, and began to destroy the seals once more...

Knights of the Seal's Curse Staff

■ Drakengard 2

Back when General Oror still lived, there was a magician who was assigned to protect the District of Soul Flame. He possessed the ability to control fire.

The magician was a good friend and a confidant of General Oror. He used his power to cleanse the land of Soul Flame.

After Oror was killed by an enemy, the magician left the knights. He did not take kindly the new general's methods. Acutely aware of the plight of his former wards, he returned to the district to ease the suffering of the oppressed.

The magician sold everything in his possession to feed the hungry. He even sold weapons which were crucial to his use of magic. When all of his wealth and power had been exhausted, he starved to death.

■ Drakengard 3

All I know is loss. An empty body with something great and substantial missing. I fill the hole the only way I can, and turn my eyes from the emptiness that wells up.

I know little of what I was. The curious small child. The lily-white skin. The confused expression as the question was asked: "Do the Watchers sing?"

Fear drives me forward. The darkness that laps at my feet, the fate I can never flee from. I scream aloud that I cannot let it take me. ...I cannot let it take me.

All that remains is my memory. The steely gaze that fixed itself forward through the youth and inexperience and confusion. The gaze that will someday open a new path.

Sealstaff: Calamitous Sonnet

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess... So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

She was a goddess who lived for her depraved love, and was fated to die for it. She was a noble goddess.

Sealed inside was water, the power to make life.

Seer's Lure

■ Drakengard 3

The youngest prince held ambitions of the throne. But his elder brother fought a campaign of great battles and earned the people's adoration. And so, he had to be dealt with.

The youngest prince was in a battle against a nearby kingdom when he looted a fine spear from a fallen soldier. Suddenly, a voice rang out, "Seek ye power?" And the prince nodded.

Many victories greeted the young prince, while his brother's fortunes soured. Soon, he sat upon the throne he desired so much. But then the voice returned: "Now I shall claim it."

The new king lost all. His men died in battle. His wife and son died of disease. With tears of blood streaming down his face, he cursed the world and fell upon his spear.

Northern Siren

■ Drakengard 2

To a tiny pub in a northern port, a pretty young girl visited. Beautiful skin, alluring voice, all the men fell in love. She only carried with her a staff. She said she would sing.

Men gathered to see the girl. Squeezed into the tiny pub. The girl sang songs of the ocean. The men listened to her voice. They all tried to win her heart. But she would say: "No, not you."

One month later a traveler visited the pub where the girl now worked. Innocent eyes, handsome face. His smile was so charming. She knew what she had to do. She told him that he was the one.

The next day, the girl left with the boy. Leaving only her staff and a letter. The staff was a token of thanks. The letter said: "I'm an ocean spirit and it was time I went home." Men sang: "You could have said."

Dream Blossom

■ Drakengard 2

In a far-eastern land, there lived a king, who made a pact with a spirit to acquire the strength he needed to protect his kingdom. He would be absent for months, defending the borders of his realm against demonic incursions. He spent so little time in the capital, in fact, that many of his subjects did not even know his face.

One such subject was a renowned female warrior; whose heroic exploits were famous throughout the kingdom. During the season of spring blossom, she demonstrated her skills with a staff before the king. Though each had heard stories about the other before that day, they had never actually met.

It was love at first sight. In the space of a moment, the two heroes were under each other's spell. The warrior exchanged the ring that adorned her staff – a priceless heirloom that had been in her family for generation – for the king's ornate blade, and they vowed to fight, side by side, to protect the kingdom.

Despite their effort, the demons gained ground in the years that followed. Town and villages were destroyed and eventually the capital fell. The lovers fought on until the very end, but when the dust of the final battle settled, all that remained was a staff bearing the words: "If we should part, we'll meet again, beneath the blossom".

Phoenix Curse

■ Drakengard 2

Back, when magic flourished, magicians played an integral role on the battlefield. The potency of their magic was derived in large part from the power of their staffs. Indeed, wars were fought over the ownership of powerful staffs - especially the staffs of the ancient's magicians, which contained mighty spells, long forgotten.

At around that time, a magician found a staff buried in some ancient ruins. Though he wasn't especially gifted, using the staff's power, he was capable of unimaginable feats and soared up through the ranks of his army. Within a year, he sat at the general's right hand.

The magician's powers knew no bounds on the battlefield and he became very influential. The one day, an identical staff was found in the same ruins, with hundreds more like it... In a matter of months, every kingdom had acquired one, and the war raged on with renewed ferocity.

The magician who wielded the original staff had relied upon its power, and neglected to train. The other magicians were different. With their finely-honed skills and the power of the staff combined, they easily defeated their lazy counterparts. By the year's end, he had been demoted to the rank of a mere soldier. Obscurity beckoned.

Monk's Red Staff

■ Drakengard 2

Once, a high-ranking priest traveled to the western lands with three companions. He was to receive a sacred book.

On the way there, he performed acts of charity in the villages he passed through, and his companions cleansed the lands of monsters who threatened the people.

Slaying the monsters was the specialty of one of the priest's traveling companions. It was he who wielded this staff. In his skillful hands, it protected the priest and ensures their safe passage to the western land.

When the party arrived at their destination, the sacred book was placed in the priest's care as promised. With their quest at an end, the priest thanked his companions and honored each of them with a fitting "name".

Urick's Axe

■ Drakengard 2

A king who made offerings to the reaper, hoping to live forever, commissioned this axe to act as an instrument of the gods. Its purpose: to sever the necks of beautiful young men and drink their blood in the reaper's honor. It has tasted the blood of many hundreds, and the reaper has prospered from these tributes.

For the first ceremony, the king chose two men and ordered one to execute the other. Every subsequent month, he would choose a new executioner to sacrifice the last. So, it continued, year after year, executioners becoming sacrifices, until the month of the king's one hundred and fiftieth birthday.

The pair involved in the ceremony this month were best friends. When one had sacrificed the other, he turned to the king, crying and said: "I shall give my own life to the reaper. I shall walk the road to Hades with my friend." Then he cut off his own head and the axe pierced the altar so deeply that none could remove it. The king's long life was at an end.

The axe finally found its way into the hands of Urick, where it once more provides sacrifices to the reaper. The cycle of blood which curses it cannot be halted – a secret known only by the reaper himself.

Yaha's Staff

■ Drakengard 2

A bureaucrat was accused of treachery and executed by his distrustful king. His family followed his fate, but the executioner took pity upon his youngest son. He let the boy go and told the king that the job was done.

The bureaucrat's son grew up to be a beautiful young man. He made his living as a thief, stealing goods from the bazaar. Sometimes, he would be caught and beaten, but the pain was nothing to him compared to the joy of revenge would bring. In time, he used the money he'd saved to bribe his way into a job at the king's castle.

The boy's androgynous beauty caught the king's eye right away and soon enough, he became one of the King's "special" companions. Late one night, he decided that the time had finally come to exact vengeance, so he headed to the king's bedchamber armed with his father's staff, an elegant weapon tipped with a deadly blade.

However, the king became suspicious when he saw beads of sweat on the boy's brow, and called for his guards. As they converged on him, the boy cut his own throat to the tune of the king's victorious laughter. Perhaps it was fate that Lieutenant Yaha, whose own beauty had shaped his twisted destiny, would eventually own this staff.

Zhangpo's Axe

■ Drakengard 2

In a small village, a man lived with his pet mouse in a shack. He was a kindly soul, but the other villagers mistrusted him because his face had been disfigured since birth. Despite their prejudice, he harbored no bitterness towards them, smiling even when children threw stones at him.

Secretly the villagers schemed to drive their unsightly neighbor away. So, they claimed that his mouse damaged their crops, and captured it one day. While he wandered the forest searching for his little companion, they cut off its head, and laid its body on his doorstep.

When the poor man returned to his shack, he saw that his only friend in the world had been murdered. With a howl of despairing rage, he took his axe and decapitated each of the villagers in turn, piling their heads in the center of the common. To add another to the pile, he then cut off his own, and the axe tumbled from his lifeless grasp.

When it was finally retrieved from its grizzly resting place, the axe's blade had been dried red by the villagers' blood. Lieutenant Zhangpo, whose pact cost him the pleasure of eating, may have tried to replace the loss sensation with the joy of butchering foes with this axe.

Mourning Thorn

■ Drakengard 2

"I'm so hungry..." The hobgoblin decided to help his boss as he always did. Usually he had to get food by helping out with various odd jobs, but today he would get a meal without having to do anything at all. An attack on a human village was planned for the following evening, and a hearty meal was provided in a preparation.

So they charged into battle, expecting a swift victory. But the humans repelled their attack with great determination, and the fight raged on. In the midst of the carnage, the hobgoblin fell into a shallow well. There he found a magnificent scythe. It was the failed creation of a demented magician.

The scythe was designed to increase its wielder's desire to win. In reality, however, it brought out other uncontrollable desires in its wielder. Deemed useless, it had been thrown into the well. The hobgoblin climbed out of the well with the scythe in his hands. Hungry for food and blood, he began to kill humans left and right.

But the scythe's power soon began to overwhelm the hobgoblin. When all of the humans were dead, he began to bite and maim the other goblins. Even murdering and eating the entirety of his own tribe failed to satiate his appetite, and finally he slit his own throat with the scythe. It was later found by a beautiful elf.

Sinful Scream

■ Drakengard 3

He committed a crime. The famine raged, taxes rose without mercy, and his parents vanished. Soon his siblings grew gaunt with hunger, and for them, he took action.

He committed a crime. He shared stolen milk and bread with his five young siblings, allowing himself none. Instead, he simply watched as they devoured the bounty.

He committed a crime. When the rich merchants found him, he was not allowed to die for his sin. That honor fell to his siblings, for they alone had consumed the stolen goods.

He committed a crime. His siblings' ravaged bodies lay in the street. He gazed upon them, rubbed the open sores from his own public whipping, and heaved a voiceless sob.

■ Drakengard 3

Why did I lose my child? Why did my child have to die? Why must I bear this punishment?

All the other children survived. Why did mine perish? Theirs should have died, too! Every last one of them! ...No. I mustn't think this way! They are all precious.

We must protect my lost child, and all the others, too. But this world is chaos and strife. How can we hope to safeguard the children? The precious, precious children.

To protect them, I must join them. But there are so many. Wait. I know. I must chew them up. Chew them all. Open my mouth and chew all the pretty baaaaaabieeeeees...

Sealaxe: Calamitous Rhythm

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess... So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.
She was a legendary goddess who held the seeds within her body and saved mankind from ruin.

Sealed inside was time, the conqueror of space and all dimensions.

Zero's Blade

■ Drakengard 3

From the moment I was born, there was nothing. That's how I wound up with the name Zero.

I tried and failed to find value in my life. Even religion failed me, for I would have sooner fought and killed a god than pray to it.

I took lives and felt nothing. I killed without regret. Right? Wrong? Sin? Redemption? I couldn't even work up the emerge to care.

Like a child, I waited and hoped. Hoped for the moment when this sad shell of a life would finally be over.

Eternal Voice

■ Drakengard 3

A visitor? Ah, yes. Come hear the song, then. The innkeeper and her daughter will greet you warmly. Their food and drink are without compare, and the girl is a feast for the eyes.

The girl's song is the best thing about the place. A single listen will drive all your troubles away. Did you know she has a sister? Ah, if only the sang a duet...

Welcome back, traveler! It's been a while. Come to see the girls again? You certainly do like them! It's been decades since I first told you of them, and yet here you are again.

What's that, traveler? You wonder why the girls never age? Ha ha ha! Those are the children of the girls you once knew! Surely you didn't think they were immortal! ...Did you?

Ceremonial Blade

■ Drakengard 3

The prince I serve was destined to lead our nation. But alas, we had been nearly destroyed in an unjust war; betrayed from within, and left to wither and die.

The prince I serve grew into a strong, handsome young man. After much grueling toil, he rebuilt our land and became its king. It was a wonderful, wonderful land.

But that land is long gone. You will find it on no map. And my king fell when his nation was defeated.

My king kept his ceremonial blade close. And to the very end, he never suspected me. It remains a regret of mine. ...Ah, but no matter. It's just a silly little story now.

Sealblade: Calamitous Melody

■ Drakengard 2

A master blacksmith, embittered by the god's maltreatment of the world, vowed to forge a weapon with which to destroy them.

The power of the seal negates the power of the gods, and the seal derives its power from the goddess... So, the blacksmith sealed the power of the goddess into his creation.

She was a goddess whose heart concealed a forbidden love. She was a pure goddess.
Sealed inside was life.

Virginal Sin

■ Drakengard 3

Once, there were three young girls. Though they lived in an age when arranged marriages were the standard, they swore to each other that they would always protect their chastity.

One girl cut her beautiful blonde hair and commanded a battalion in place of her dead brother. She died a fine death, with her beloved man servant at her side.

One girl, a brunette and an avid reader of books, loved a man from a poor family. Knowing their love could never be, the couple threw themselves into the sea.

The last girl, a flaxen-haired beauty, never knew her friends had broken their vows of chastity. She remained a virgin all her life, eventually passing away of old age.

Bloodwyrm's Flame

■ Drakengard 3

It had lived long. Sometimes it seemed it had lived for all the time in the world, the usual cycle of life and death being little more than a farce.

Its slow, heavy body was old and wizened. It had witness countless human lives kindle and then extinguish in the blink of an eye.

It had lived with the heart it was losing bit by bit. It had forgotten how to roar, or gnash, or fly into a rage.

The flames of war raged on in an endless stream of conquest and slaughter and death. In the face of this unchanging flow of history, the dragon finally grew weary of living.

Saintly Brimstone

■ Drakengard 3

The villagers doubted the strange new missionary at first, but soon his charming words and handsome smile won them over, and they welcomed him with open arms.

Beauty was power in the village. The beautiful were royalty, while the ugly suffered as slaves. Soon, the scarred and deformed of the village begged the missionary for help.

Smiling, the missionary raised a hand. In a flash, the ugly villagers were transformed, their faces all identical to his own. And yet, his work was not complete...

Soon, every man, woman, and child looked like the missionary, right down to the grin. They no longer cried or grew angry, leaving the village with grim, hollow smiles.

Bloodletter

■ Drakengard 3

My cursed body bleeds once a month like clockwork. I am thin and weak and more ugly than most. I am, in a word, different-and people do not take kindly to such.

Too weak to work, a mere useless husk, I spend my days in a basement waiting for the abuse I know is sure to come. ...In my dreams, my body no longer bleeds.

I feel sick. Sick. Sick and queasy. In my dream, the man who abuses me appears again. But this time, I seize the weapon he has long used to torment me.

In the dream, I hit him again and again. And then I see, for the very first time, that I am not the only one who bleeds. I am human. Just like him. And this makes me smile.

Gaia's Flame

■ Drakengard 3

Beauty is only skin deep. The twisted hearts within remain unseen.

I wish for the fortune of man.
I scorn the persistent insects.

A flame illuminates the night.
But it brings only Stygian dark.

To burn is proof of witchery. And
I am the one who lights the fire.

False Pact

■ Drakengard 3

One of the villagers was a compulsive liar. He bandied a sword about carelessly, boasting of his demon-slaying exploits. Soon he had lost the truth of all his peers.

One day, a traveler arrived asking the way to a lair of demons. The villagers were silent, but the great liar spoke. "Have no fear!" he said. "I will lead you to the demons' den!"

The man lied and lied, and each time the traveler believed him, they became more lost. But when the liar finally showed the true path, he was forced to save the traveler from the demon.

"I finally told the truth," said the dying liar, "and now I must pay for it." The traveler slew the demon, became a hero, and has carried his new-found friend's sword ever since.

Skyward Thunder

■ Drakengard 3

One day, a young boy encountered a white horse with blue eyes by the side of a lush forest spring.
Each day he passed the animal, he stopped to tend to its injured leg.

On the fifth day, the horse allowed the boy to touch its beautiful white hair.
On the tenth day, its deep blue eyes revealed a hard-won trust. Soon after, the horse vanished.

The boy figured the leg had healed, and regretted missing his chance to ride the steed.
Decades passed. The boy, now a withered old man, told his grandchildren of the white horse.

Just as the man spoke of the horse, thunder boomed from the sky and he vanished.
Some say they saw a man on a white horse amid the lightning, storming off to the heavens.

Cries and Whispers

■ Drakengard 3

Seriously? You don't even know how to use this sword? Now that's just pathetic.
It couldn't possibly be easier. Even little ol' me can spin this thing around!

A disciple at my level has more than just strength, you know.
He has enough bewitching beauty to make his enemies swoon. Looks like it's working on you, too! Hah!

Money really does make the world go 'round, doesn't it?
I should know, given the vast fortune I command. ...Not that They let me use it yet. Lord knows why.

Hm? Is there anything more important in life than beauty, strength, and money...?
Hah! What a kidder you are! I mean, do you even need to ask?

Once a Woman

■ Drakengard 3

The tower loomed, its white stonework unmarked by a single crack or crevice. Inside, a girl lived alone. Because none of her servants spoke to her, she knew nothing of speech.

Throughout her captivity, the girl's servants refused to acknowledge her existence. But local villagers knew of her, and when a great famine struck the land, they took action.

The villagers killed every servant as they climbed the tower. "Cursed wench!" they shouted. "This is your fault!" But the girl could not understand the words.

The girl was overjoyed to finally be exposed to emotion, even that of rage. A smile came to her face as the sword struck home, securing her place as the offering to the village gods.

Imperial Fang

■ Drakengard 3

The warming breath of green granted fortune to all. The shining azure flow gave blessings to all. Flowers bloomed. Life teemed. It was a land of promise.

Countless great forces waged war over the land, troubling and trampling its bounties. Soon, mountains of mangled corpses replaced the blessings of earlier, better days.

Time passed. Trees grew over the bodies, and soon the cries of war were replaced by softly babbling brooks. Only a lone sword planted in the ground spoke of the terrible past.

The young king drew the sword from the earth. "I claim this beautiful land as my own!" he said. Will the cycle begin anew? ...Alas, I must save that story for another time.

Feral King's Wildblade

■ Drakengard 3

Ah! You have a key eye for quality, sir. This sword comes from a far-off land. Know you the tale?
A young man slew a horrid beast, and grew so renowned, the king became mad with envy.

The king sent him on an impossible quest, and the young man fell to the very monsters he was meant to slay.
His sister pleaded for his remains, but all she received was his sword.

The sister became the king's mistress, and she used the sword to murder him before turning it on herself.
And now the blade is used to exact revenge on... Sir? Are you okay?

What's with that sword in your hand? ...Revenge you say? B-But I'm just a weapons merchant!
My sword didn't kill your family! It's just a blade! Just a... No! Stop! Wai-

Furiae's Dagger

■ Drakengard 3

I mustn't trouble my brother. He's busy with his sword practice, so I must be a good girl and not bother him to play with me.

I mustn't trouble my brother. He's busy with politics, so I must be a good girl and not bother him to talk with me.

I mustn't trouble my brother. He's busy fighting other countries, so I must be a good girl and not bother him with my worries.

I mustn't trouble my brother. I mustn't let him know of the dark lust hiding in my bosom. If he were to see me like this, I would have to end my own life.

NieR's Blade

■ Drakengard 3

Yonah, stop. Sit down and eat. If you keep running around like this you're going to drop your pie on the- See? What'd I say? You're already making a big mess.

Emil! Quit rummaging through my closet, will you? There's nothing in there but a bunch of old underwear. You sit down, too, and finish your soup.

Where'd Kainé gone? ...Huh? She went to find more food? But I gave her an entire roast pig! How in the world did she eat that entire thing?

In a quiet dream, I think of the world that was lost. I think of the people and my own past self. And I think of the happiness I'll never again know.

Kainé's Swords

■ Drakengard 3

She had suffered two unspeakable losses. The first, her beloved grandmother. The second, her beloved friend.

So she killed. She killed the enemies that stole those who were most precious to her. She killed the enemies that placed the curse of revenge upon her. She killed.

But then she lost sight. She lost sight of the purpose behind her vengeful rampage. She lost sight of life's meaning amidst all the slaughter.

Inside a dark cavern, she dreamed. She dreamed of those she would be able to see again after death came for her.

Two's Sword

■ Drakengard 3

I thought being a pair would allow us to survive. I mean, it was just like my name, you know? We were two then, and we would remain two forever.

When we held hands, we connected. I believed we truly had nothing to fear.

Our time was meant to be forever. Forever and ever. We were destined to keep this small life of ours secure.

I heard the sound of something breaking deep within me. There is no going back. I hear all the noise slipping slowly away into the onrushing dark...

Three's Scissors

■ Drakengard 3

My name is Three, I'm the fourth eldest of the Intoners. In what order was I made?

Heh heh... You're such an adorable little doll. Here, let me just patch you up with some of my expert stitching, hmm?

Oh? Did you lose a limb or two? Don't you worry, little doll. I'll fix you up good as new. I'll fix you up as many times as it takes...

One, two, three, four, five, six... Heh heh heh... Another little doll to join my menagerie!

Guardian's Oath

■ Drakengard 3

Oath the First: Be prepared to sacrifice all for the sake of his majesty. Always pursue justice, even at the cost of your life.

Oath the Second: Always strive to eliminate evil from this world. Never surrender, though the battle may seem lost.

Oath the Third: Allow no evil to go unchecked, no matter how small. Show no mercy to criminals, be they man, woman, or child.

Oath the Fourth: Any who commit evil are equally deserving of death. Be the king or pauper, death is the only answer.

Twisted Hunger

■ Drakengard 3

I detest ugly things. I hate the putrid breath of monsters, and I hate people corrupted by desire. How can they even stand to live like that?

Morals? Morals make me vomit. Trotting out truth and justice? Love for your fellow man? Pffft. What a crock of shit. How can people live in a disgusting place like this?

Life is ugly, and people are nothing but fools. Why did the world have to end up this way?

The rotten fruit tastes the sweetest. A rotten body is beauty personified. Why does everyone fail to notice these things?

Thunder Princess

■ Drakengard 3

The strait was called the "Ship Graveyard" for its stormy waters. Few ships dared to cross it, and soon the nearby island found itself dangerously short on supplies.

The islanders decided to make a sacrifice to the god of the seas. As they debated who would be offered up, the daughter of the island headman gave herself as a tribute.

Once the fairest woman on the island, her skin was now covered in burns. Her father tried to stop her, but she donned the ceremonial armor and threw herself into the sea.

Soon, the waves lessened and the sea was calmed. The large spear the girl carried with her stands alone on the seabed, occasionally quivering with the sounds of distant thunder.

Spear of Empathy

■ Drakengard 3

In a poor nation lived two knights: one clad in ivory armor, the other in ebon black. They battled to bring fortune to the land, while occasionally sharing dreams over a skin of wine.

But over time, they quarreled. The ebon knight began to distrust his despotic king, while the ivory knight strove to keep his oath. And soon, the friends became bitter rivals.

One day, a cadre of knights held a coup against the cruel king, led by the ebon knight. But the ivory knight slew his companion and quelled the rebellion, earning much fame and fortune.

The ivory knight calmed his king's despotic nature, and was given an ornate spear as a reward. But he refused, and instead insisted on using the spear that had slain his onetime friend.

Eternal Wail

■ Drakengard 3

Didja got lost, sir? Well, I'm sorry to hear that. ...A scholar, ya say? How excellent! This village has a fine library. I wager you'll like it very much.

There's a kind and beautiful lady that keeps the library runnin'. She loves books, she does. Spends all day copyin' tomes to make sure they ain't lost to time.

But such beauty can be deadly! Aye, her twin sister sings by the village fountain, and she'll have yer head on a plate if ya make false moves on the librarian.

Those twins protect the village, they do. ...Eh? Since when? Oh, I couldn't say for sure. Long and longer still. I reckon they'll probably do so until the end of time.

Eternal Wail

■ Drakengard 3

No known magic could cure the little girl's disease. Her only joys were the nightly visits from a nameless masked conjurer who came to her with a magical staff in hand.

The conjurer shared his arcane talents with her. One night, a shower of glittering light. The next, an orchestra of tiny songbirds. Another, the arc of a dazzling rainbow.

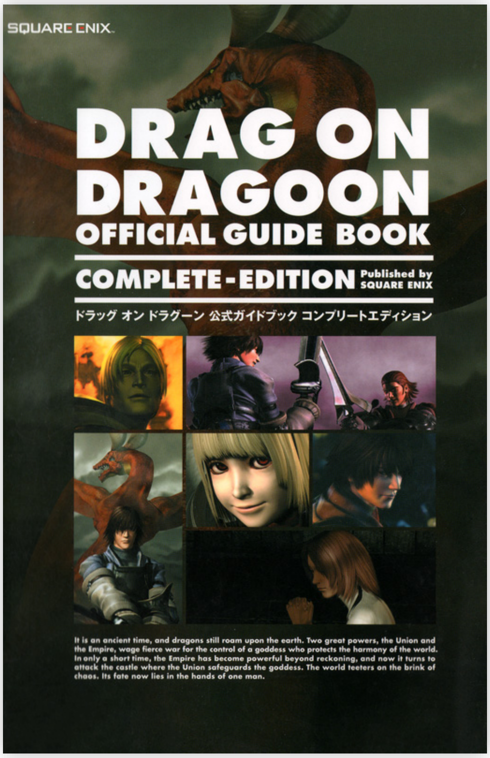
Yet the disease slowly consumed the girl's body. One night, when her time was near, she smiled at the conjurer and thanked him. Then she grew cold and smiled no more.

The conjurer had been forbidden from showing magic to others, but when he returned and confessed that he'd taken the staff without permission, his master told him to keep it. That night, the conjurer clutched the staff tightly and wept bitter tears.

Source Materials

Where you can find and verify all information cited

Books



Drag-On Dragoon

Official Guide Book – Complete-Edition

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2003, available in Japanese only.

Contains:

- Drakengard's Novellas
- Character information
- Location of the weapons
- Weapons Stories
- Strategy guide

Fan-translated by Kestrel.



Drag-On Dragoon 10th Anniversary

World Inside

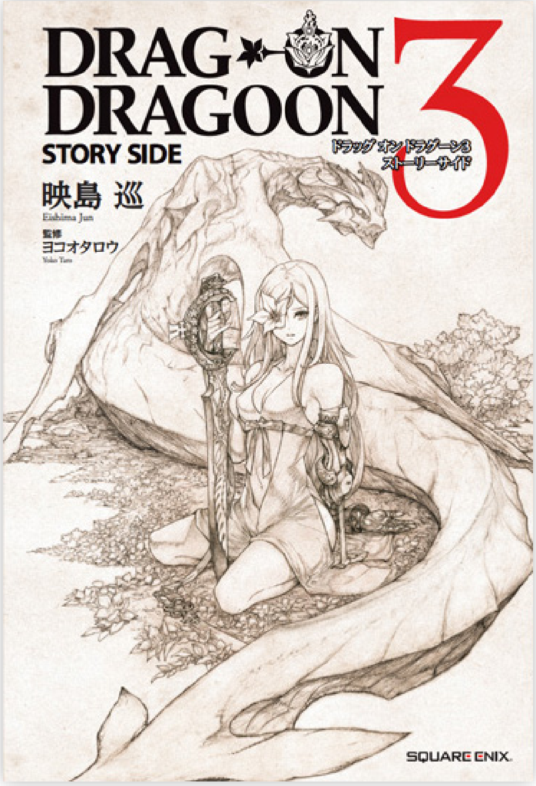
By SQUARE ENIX

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2013, available in Japanese only.

Contains:

- Timeline from 1 to 5012
- The Flame of Prometheus
- The Garden of Light
- The Song of Fourteen Years
- Commentary by Yoko Taro
- Short stories for each Drakengard 3 character

Fan-translated by kho-dazat and [redacted].



Drag-On Dragoon 3

Story Side

By Jun Eishima

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2014, available in Japanese only.

Contains the E ending for Drakengard 3,
told in the form of a narrative.

Fan-translated by █████, Linq and Bdouine.



Drag-On Dragoon 3

Artbook and The Complete Guide

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by Kadokawa in 2014,
available in Japanese only.



GRIMOIRE NieR

-Project Gestalt & Replicant System-

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by ASCII Media Works
in 2010, available in Japanese only.

Contains:

- 10 Novellas
- Characters Information
- Creators' Interview
- Weapons Stories
- Timeline from 2003 to 3465

Fan-translated by FFTranslations, kharan_zechts, Defade, DaBubba, gisaelle, RaizinMonk, and sunzi.



NieR:Automata
World Guide

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2017, available in Japanese,
English, French, and German.

Contains:

- Memory Cage
- Orbital Bunker Observation Diary
- Ciphered Story 1
- Character Information



NieR:Automata
Strategy Guide

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by Kadokawa
in 2017, available in Japanese, English
(TBA), French, and German (TBA).

Contains:

- Memory Thorn
- A Much Too Silent Sea
- Small Flowers
- Ciphered Story 2
- Chapters Comments
- Timeline from 3627 to 12543
- Q&A with Yoko Taro
- Weapon Stories



NieR:Automata

Long Story Short

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by VIZ LLC
in 2018, available in Japanese and English.

It is a novelization of the game's plot with added previously unknown character's thoughts and some additional story for Adam and Eve and A2.



NieR:Automata

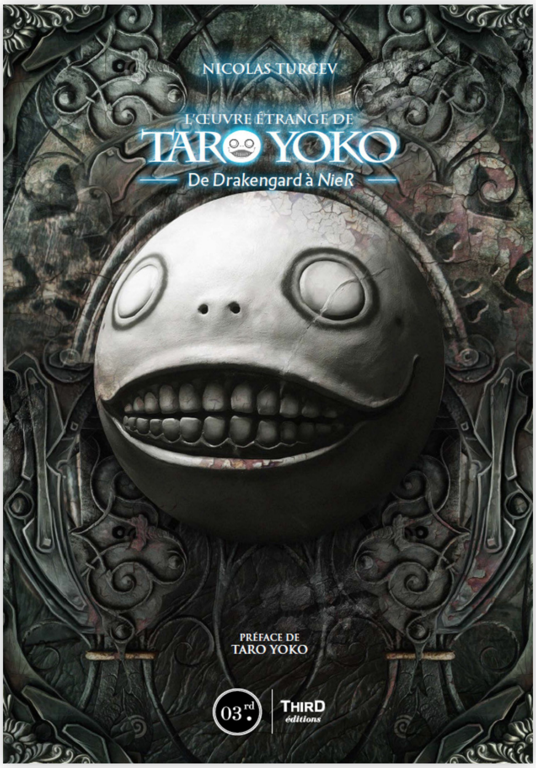
Short Story Long

By SQUARE ENIX

Published by VIZ LLC
in 2019, available in Japanese and English.

Contains:

- Emil's Recollection
- YoRHa Ver. 1.05
- The Flame of Prometheus
- Orbital Bunker Observation Diary
- Memory Thorn
- A Much Too Silent Sea
- Small Flowers



L'œuvre étrange de Taro Yoko

By Nicolas Turcev

Published by Third Editions
in 2018, available in English, and French.

Contains:

- The state of the video game industry in Japan between 1998 and 2017
- Behind-the-scenes anecdotes
- The creation process for the soundtrack
- Summary of the entire timeline
- Analysis of each game

Online sources

https://theark.wiki

- Tons of lore, interview, and information for NieR:Automata exclusively

https://drakengard.fandom.com
https://nier.fandom.com

- Encyclopedia for fans of Drakengard or NieR
- Almost all short stories
- Links toward other resources

http://www.grimoire-cendre.fr

- A French website with numerous translations and analyses about NieR and Drakengard.
- An extensive gallery of images

https://lparchive.org/NIER
https://lparchive.org/Drakengard
https://lparchive.org/Drakengard-3

- Let's play for each game by The Dark Id
- It was really useful for the Story Summaries
- Comparison between NieR Replicant and NieR Gestalt

https://youtu.be/L3wScHE28K8

toco toco - Yoko Taro, Game Creator

- A documentary about Yoko Taro with a lot of never seen before moments and anecdotes.

https://youtu.be/LD6xCLlF5dY

Drakengard 3 – Philosophies of Violence

- An interview with the game's director Yoko Taro. He offers his insights on the video game industry and how this shaped the development of the Drakengard series over the past 10 years

Drama CD



NieR Replicant Drama CD

The Lost Words and the Red Sky

Composed by Nobuyoshi Sano, Keiichi Okabe, Keigo Hoashi, Kakeru Ishihama

Published by Frontier Works
in 2011, available in Japanese only.

Contains:

- 21 audio tracks about NieR's background
- The Great Space War
- An alternative story about the characters of NieR Replicant, living a typical High School life.

Fan translated by /u/spffn and .

https://youtu.be/SUfWyo74zho

NieR:Automata Dinner Talk Show (English subs)

- Tons of information
- Cute moments between the cast
- A bit too much beer

https://youtu.be/32iOlf6NgGc

YoRHa Boys Stage Play, Ver 1.1
Fan-translated by Dofucakes.

https://youtu.be/G3UKundtjwY

YoRHa Stage Play, Ver 1.2
Fan-translated by Russian fans and .

https://redd.it/96xqjo/

Fan-translation of the NieR Replicant Drama CD by spffn. The Space War and Replicant Private High School are fan-translated by .

http://www.famitsu.com/game/news/1235592_1124.html

Famitsu Developer Interview

- The source for a lot of YOKO Facts on NieR.
- Summarized and fan-translated by Defade.

https://redd.it/172yy8/

GRIMOIRE NieR fan-translated by kharan_zechts, Defade, DaBubba, gisaelle, RaizinMonk, and Sunzi.

- Adds some interesting interviews, one of them with Emi Evans.

https://redd.it/9c35v8/

Complete Roster of Known YoRHa androids, compiled by , @469zichu_g, and /u/Kiloueka.

Stage Play



YoRHa, Ver 1.1

Stage Play

By Yoko Taro

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2018, available in Japanese only.

Fan translated by .



YoRHa Boys, Ver 1.1

Stage Play

By Yoko Taro

Published by SQUARE ENIX
in 2018, available in Japanese only.

Fan translated by Dofucakes.



Recital

NieR Music Concert

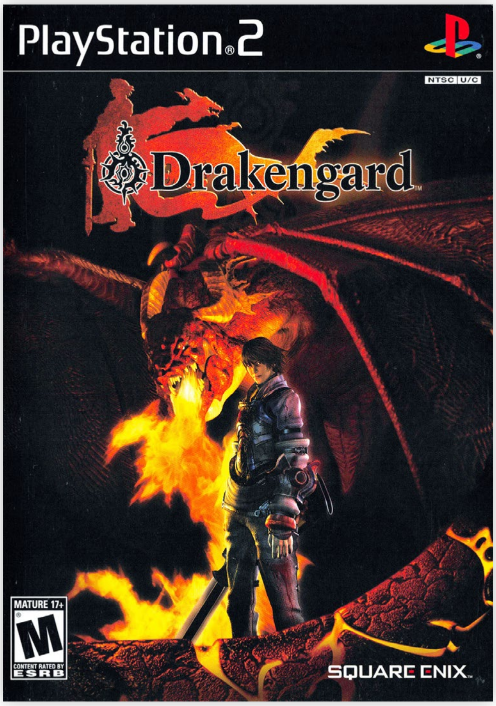
The Memories of Puppets

By Yoko Taro

Played in 2016 and 2017, available in
Japanese only.

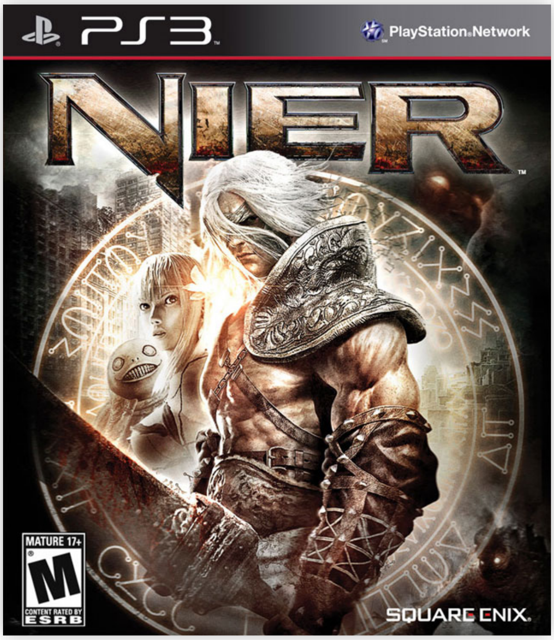
Fan translated by /u/ilfans

Games



Drakengard (2003)
PS2

Developed by Cavia
Published by SQUARE ENIX



NIER (2010)
PS3 | Xbox 360

Developed by Cavia
Published by SQUARE ENIX



Drakengard 3 (2013)
PS3

Developed by Access Games
Published by SQUARE ENIX



NieR:Automata (2017)
PS4 | Xbox One | Steam

Developed by PlatinumGames
Published by SQUARE ENIX

Postface

This book came to be for multiple reasons:

First of all, I was very passionate about Yoko Taro's games, and I found myself craving for more knowledge. I had already played NieR:Automata, one of my best gaming experiences of all time. NieR was also a good one, with even better character developments and—debatably—better world-building. I was excited to continue on this journey. However, before delving into Drakengard, I wanted to clarify any question I had about the NieR series. With that much information to absorb, from so many different sources, it can be hard to understand the bigger picture. This is the origin of this book: it's a notebook for myself, where all knowledge I come across will be stored, gathered, compared, and linked with each other.

Comes the second reason: Despite having so many great sources to choose from, they are still somewhat disconnected from each other. And inside each of them, the information can be scattered all over the place. This is why I chose to write this book chronologically. This desire to order everything in a meaningful way is emphasized by the timeline at the top of each page: you can always tell what year it is, and turning the pages will always push the story forward.

Another goal was to connect together the data collected: story, novellas, development facts, interviews…all should flow together and complete each other. Are we speaking about this character? You can read more about it on this page. Did I hear the word "Pact"? Here is the definition in a separate textbox. Trying to bring the "hyperlinked" quality right on the paper was a fun part of writing this book, and it diversifies the appearance of a page.

Lastly, I realized that some parts of the Yokoverse's history are somehow unreachable. For example, what happened between Drakengard 3 and Drakengard 1 is unclear, and having multiple timelines doesn't help matters. "Drakengard 3 Story Summary" was especially challenging to write due to the source material being only partially translated.

Without a doubt, writing this book has brought me great satisfaction. And this is the reason why I would like to share this joy with many people. However, I must confess: despite being more than six hundred pages long, this book solely focuses on the lore…and, this is not what Yoko Taro wants. Here, I will let the game director speak for himself:

"More than gaining knowledge, I want players to cherish the experience they have when playing the game. It's more about that instead of the knowledge they could have for every question. Of course, the theatrical stage play was more of like a YoRHa spinoff, but you don't need to know that to enjoy the game. […] It may add a little bit depth to the knowledge that you have, but you don't necessarily need to have it. I do understand the otaku mentality that you want to know everything, you want to have everything answered, you want to collect everything, but I don't see the value in knowing everything. For example, just in real life, you might not know everything about the politics that surround the world or even in your own country, and there's really no point in knowing everything that happens in the world. Maybe a lot of things, but not everything, right? What's more important is how you interact with people around you, immediately around you, and I think that's the same with video games. You don't really need to know everything that happens in the world to enjoy it."

—Yoko Taro in "Creator's interview" (GRIMOIRE NieR).

This remains me of an anime I also researched a lot: Neon Genesis Evangelion. It's a cryptic show in which the lore is left totally unexplored. If you want to learn the origin of the Angels, and their motives, you need to delve deeper into the wikis created by its fanbase. Why is the backstory so unreachable? Why not include it directly into the show? Because this is not the focus of the anime. If at the end of episode 26, you asked yourself: "What did I just watched?" or "What the **** is going on?", I'm afraid the meaning of the show went way over your head! And I can't blame you, because I'm the same. Instead of focusing on the character's inner thoughts, here I am trying to learn about SEELE's end goal. Evangelion is a psychological anime disguised as a mecha show. This is the reason why, through each episode, the spotlight will gradually shift from the robots and the operating forces and focus more on the themes of loneliness and escapism.

I often say that The Last of Us is not a game about zombies. The infection outbreak is just the setting, and not its focus. At its core, the game is all about the characters and their relationships. We don't know how the infection started. We don't know if other countries have been contaminated. Joel doesn't know and so do we. This is the same with NieR and its eponymous protagonist. He doesn't know about the Shadowlord's intention, he doesn't care when Popola and Devola are trying to explain the situation he's in. All the focus is on saving Yonah.

Video games have the incredible potential to make you experience new things. You can feel vivid emotions from a painting or a song, but games, as an art form, can be an extension of your own experience. Thinking back on some of my favorite games, I can see how they helped me introspect and question myself. Games can truly have a positive impact on one's life. However, lore itself is useless; you cannot use fictional history outside of its universe. Thus, focusing only on the lore will not bring you anything to use in the real world.

Fictional worlds are attractive. More than that, they are limited: there is a finite number of characters, rules, and stories to gather before having a complete understanding of these universes. In opposition, reality is chaotic and irrational. There are no set goals, no rules, everyone has complex personalities and behaviors. The real word is scary because you're always outside of your comfort zone. Learning to behave and find meaning in the world is an important step in adulthood. "Being alive is pretty much a constant stream of embarrassment", and we must learn to deal with it.

Now, I'm not trying to shame anyone for trying to learn the lore of a fictional universe. However, I believe there is a healthy dosage for everything. The following is nothing but a note for myself: Do not indulge in escapism. Stop immersing yourself in video games, movies, and anime, simply because it's easier. Instead, try and make new experiences in the real world, even if some end up in failure. Reality is a crappy game, but at least it cannot be summarized in six hundred pages. This complexity, this meaninglessness: it's a force. It's what makes our world "reality".

Thank you all for reading this. Even if this postface is deeply personal, I'm still hoping everyone can get something out of it. If Zero can find the strength to save this world that hates her, if Shinji can confront his existence and learn to love himself ... then anyone can accept reality in all its suffering and benefits.

APPENDIX_1

THE YOKOVERSE - The multidimensional “structure” that overlook the entire franchise

If you have played the DOD3, you may have realized that the Story Summary for Drakengard 3 does not follow any of the branches seen in the game. This is because this book only extends on the “main” branches, those that connect to the other games in the franchise.

But what are branches? Who is this mysterious—fourth wall breaking—girl called Accord? Why does the player have to go through the story multiple times before reaching the “final” ending? Those are some of the questions this section will try to answer.

Disclaimer: due to the lack of official information concerning those topics, this section will be highly subjective. This is the interpretation of the author, shared by some in the community. Different ideas and hypothesis may be more appealing to some readers so feel free to deepen your research online.

AP_1.1 God? Gods? And why is it so hatful towards humanity?

In the English localization of the games, they are referred to as “gods”: a group of deities that created and rule over this world. In the original Japanese version, it is named 神 （ *Kami* ）, or “God”. It has been assumed that this change in translation was made in order to further disconnect the Cult of the Watchers from Christianity.

So great, we have a singular God...probably. God is the creator of this world, along with every creature and person. All creatures act based upon the great “will” of God. However, God is unable to control mankind due to “free will” alone. Many people believe that God wants to eliminate humanity because they were “a mistake whose only strength is their ego”. From God’s perspective, the human race is indeed a defective creation. That is why God has created the Black Flower—and by extension the Watchers—which should more accurately be called a program for destruction. God also created the race of dragons to eradicate humanity.

Does God hate humanity that much? If so, why didn’t God destroy humanity by his own volition? Certainly, the existence known as “God” should have the power to do so. So then why did he refrain from using this power and instead enlisted others to do his bidding?

It’s a question without an answer. Perhaps someone could appreciate this situation as a test given to humanity. How can we call such an existence “God” when it personally sought the complete annihilation of humanity?

AP_1.2 The Black Flower, Magic, Dragons and Cathedral City: where do they come from?

All those anomalies came along Cathedral City when it first appeared in 856. The city looks very out of place with high buildings, roads, and an overall modern architecture. This entire place must come from the future. This is further implied when the android Accord explains that she came from the “Old World”, from which Cathedral City originates.

In Michael’s novella, we learn that the Old World was filled with “insects” and “puppets”. The latter was more intelligent than the “insects” and had projectile weaponry, along with a giant weapon which is effective against dragons. Those “puppets” had a higher lifespan and their body were stronger than humans. However, no human nor subhuman is to be found in the Old World. One day, a white magical explosion took away Cathedral City and half of the dragons to a new world: Midgard, the world of Drakengard.

Could those puppets be androids similar to Accord? Why was Cathedral City deprived of any inhabitant? What was those “insects”? If the city was empty, what triggered the white explosion? We don’t have any answers...

Well, the city wasn’t totally uninhabited. Bartas was there, protecting the Mercurius Gate that seals the Black Flower away. All we know is that “they” knew that it was a threat to the world. Bartas is now dead, so we can’t expect any answers from him.

AP_1.3 Shift, Branches, Divergence: the Multiple-World Divergence Phenomenon

An important fact to note is that before 856, the world of Drakengard was just like our own. The world was the same, the countries, the people, and all events prior to The Great Disaster. Now take the world of NieR. It was the same as ours, up until 2003 Shinjuku. Those two examples tell us something about those worlds: they were "clean" until some major magical event happened, and then everything went south.

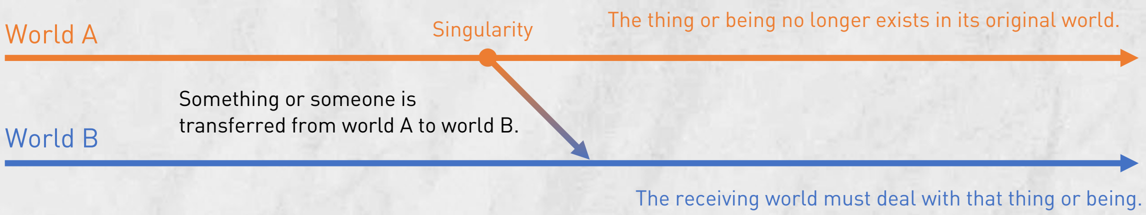
Here is my theory about the Yokoverse: the real world has we know it, is just one of many copies of itself. They all exist simultaneously and they are exact clones of each other. However, some of them has been infected by the Flower and the Dragons, both of which are God's tools for humanity destruction. God not only want to destroy mankind in one world, but in all of them. So, God created the concept of Singularities as a mean through which its tools could propagate on their own.

Singularities are defined in-game as follows: a special person, place, or things that can trigger a shift, a branch or divergence, across multiple worlds. This phenomenon occurs when a certain amount of Maso is gathered in an area and all other conditions are met. However, the "singularity" cannot be recorded as such until the existence of a new branch is confirmed.

But what are those terms: shift, branch, or divergence? Here is a schematic that can help differentiate them.

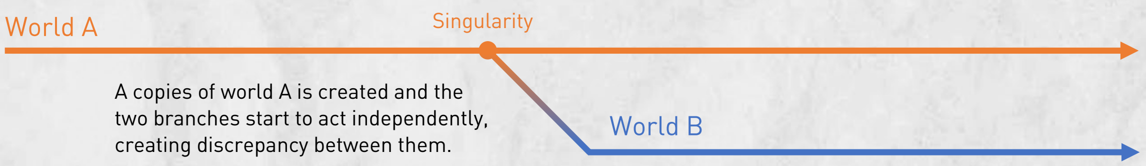
1 – Shift

(i.e. 2003 Shinjuku, The Great Disaster, or Zero being sealed in another world in ending D of Drakengard 3.)



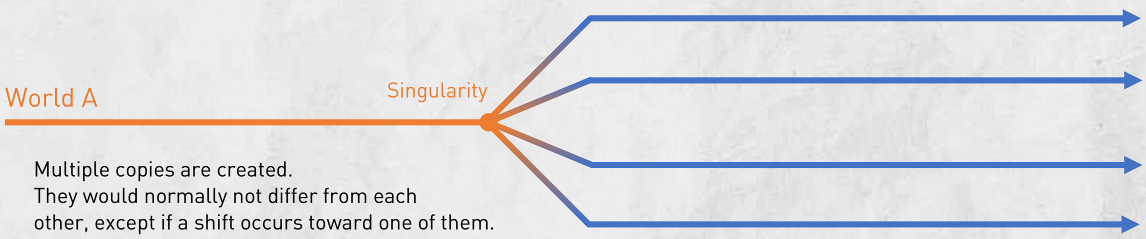
2 – Branch

(i.e. Most of the endings / branches in the entire series.)



3 – Divergence

(Never seen in the franchise, but it might explain why there are multiple clones of our world in the Yokoverse.)



Why would singularities be useful for God? Because it allows for its tools of destruction to infect clean worlds. Shifts were originally designed to transfer them to a new healthy world once humanity was destroyed in the current one. But what about branches? Or divergence? By cloning a world, this creates many new ones where humanity stills exist. Well, it does, however we must understand that cloning an infected world also results in a copy of the Black Flower which in return, increase the probability of a shift to occur toward a healthy world.

And it is effective. According to some document in SINoALICE (I know, we haven't even mentioned this opus in the series yet…), humanity has been successfully eradicated from most worlds, including the world of NieR.

Now, you may have some questions regarding the dragons or the Black Flower. Let's talk about that.

AP_1.4 Dragons and humans: an unforeseen partnership

If dragons are "God's Messengers", send to this world to eradicate humanity, why would they be "friendly" to humans? We see throughout Drakengard the stories of Dragons and humans forming bonds are becoming Pact Partners. Are dragons also a defective creation of God? Maybe. In Michael's novella, we learn that the Old World was free of any humans for at least thousands of years. They succeeded: the dragons were able to wipe out humanity is this world. Even after their original target was destroyed, they continued to fight against the "puppets" and "insects".

"None of us, not even the eldest, can remember when this battle began". God might have caused the "white magical explosion", shifting the dragons to a new healthy world for them to continue their work. However, the dragons have fought for so long, they even forgot why they were fighting. They are tired, and lonely.

"Perhaps the reason I continued aiding humans was because, somewhere in my heart, I wondered… no, hoped… they could give me something". Throughout their never-ending lives, the dragons have formed "free will". They question their purpose in this world, and act on their own. This might be God's second mistake.

AP_1.5 Why are God's servants, natural enemies of one another?

This is a good question. If the dragons and the Black Flower are God's tools for mankind destruction, why would the dragons be the natural enemies of the Flower? We learn in Drakengard 3 that dragons have a subconscious desire to consume an Intoner, aka the Flower. A dragon's power is the only known way to destroy the Flower. According to Michael, dragons have an existence deeply connected with the Flower.

Here is my theory: The Flower is a very powerful being, capable of taking many forms and possessing a strong survival instinct. However, it is a bit too effective and tends to destroy more than just humanity. God's goal is to eliminate mankind, but also to preserve the rest of its creation. So, dragons were designed by God to be capable of destroying the Flower once its job is over. They would then stay in those worlds freed from humanity and magic, as guardians of God's perfect creation.

AP_1.6 And what about that weird girl Accord?

Yeah, let's not forget about that breasts-fondler, fourth-wall breaking android.

Little information is known about her. She presents herself as one of many "recorders": androids whose duty is to observe and record timelines, from the ancient past to the distant future. They can also seal / quarantine dangerous branches to prevent the Flower from spreading to other timelines. They were built and sent back in time by an unknown group from the Old World.

They carry an oversized suitcase, containing a notebook, a tube to store their documents, and a special phone they use to call higher authorities. Apparently, they have a bunch of keys which can be used to open portals. Recorders are exclusively a female-type android model.





This specific Recorder is called Accord and her mission is to study Zero's case. She has been instructed to not interfere with the world. However, after seeing Zero fail so many times, she is tempted to give a little bit of advice.

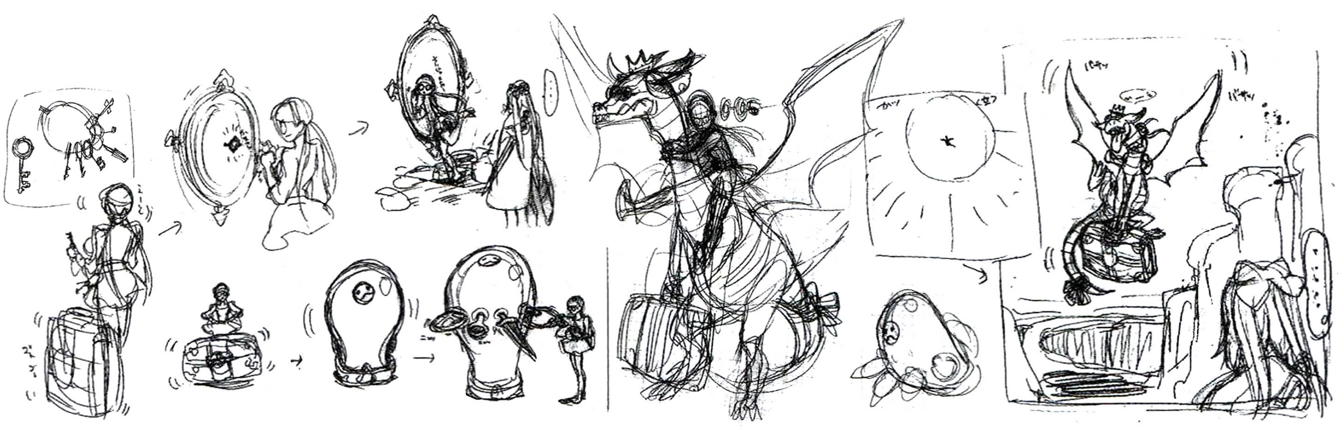
We don't know if every Recorders are like this, but Accord is quite fond of weapons; she is a weapon dealer after all! Weapons come with stories about their creation or the people that used them. It gives some insight on otherwise unrecorded eras.

She attempted to contact Zero in branch E, however she almost got killed by her. In branch D, she tried to be a little bit more diplomatic, and worked with Zero towards a better ending.

She acts enigmatic around Zero. She is also quite cheeky as seen when she prevents Zero from obtaining her notebook by groping Zero's breasts. She is very concise with the events in the timelines, taking detailed notice of the various happenings affecting several branches and their routes.

In the end of branch D, she decides to physically intervene, helping Zero to kill One. It works! However, she is seriously injured and Zero put her out of her misery. Thanks to everyone efforts, the Flower (and probably Zero) has been shifted in another branch. Then, a group of Recorders, all with the same appearance as Accord come and salute their fallen comrade. One of them takes Accord's suitcase, complimenting her "excellent work". Finally, they split up and go on their respective recording duties.

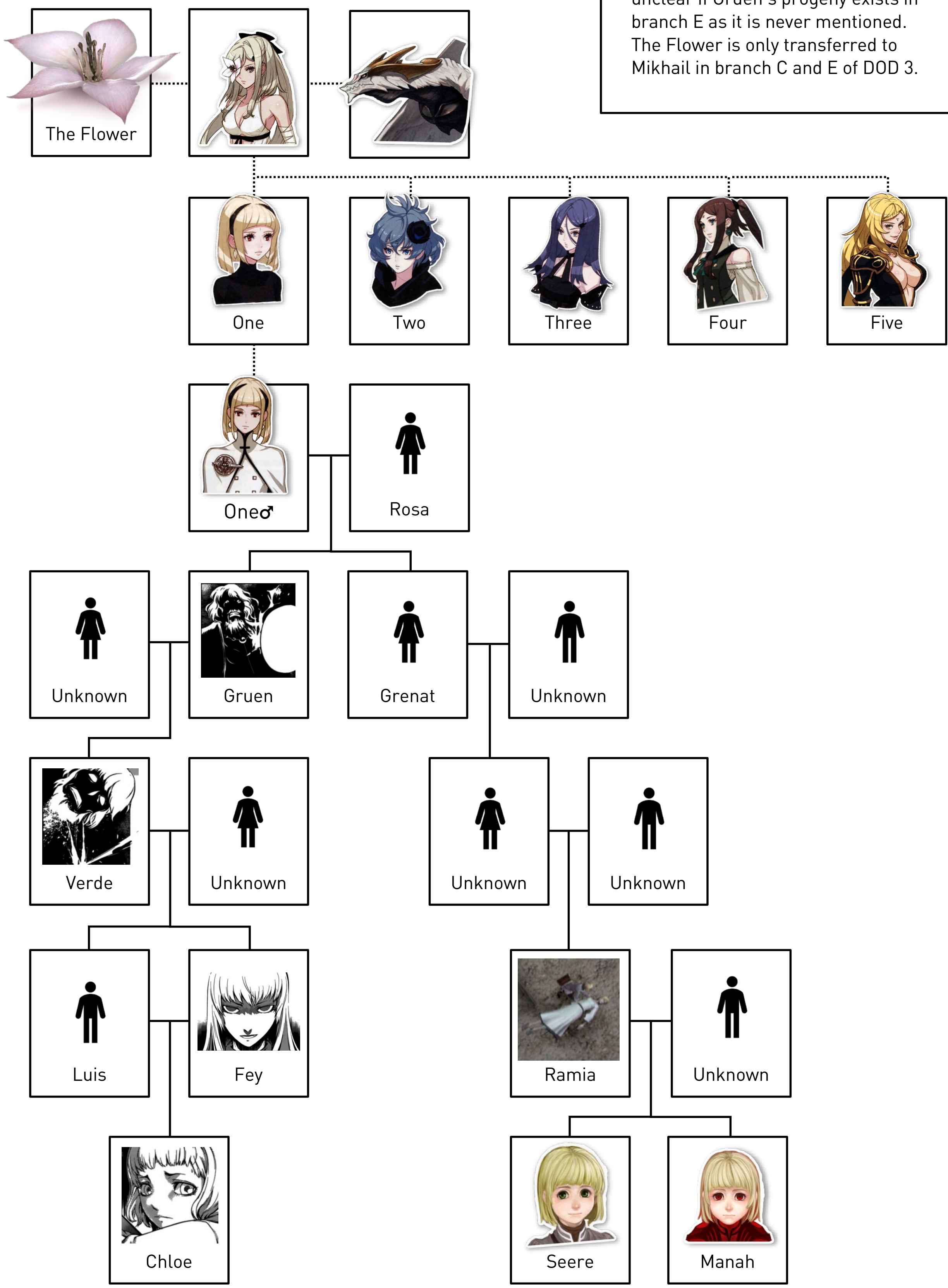
We never hear of Accord or Recorders in any other game of the series, except for NieR:Automata. One of them has taken refuge in the Kingdom of Night, the dark side of the Earth, where she continues to restore and sell weapons. Maybe one day we will learn more about the Recorders' mission, and who assigned them this duty.



APPENDIX_2

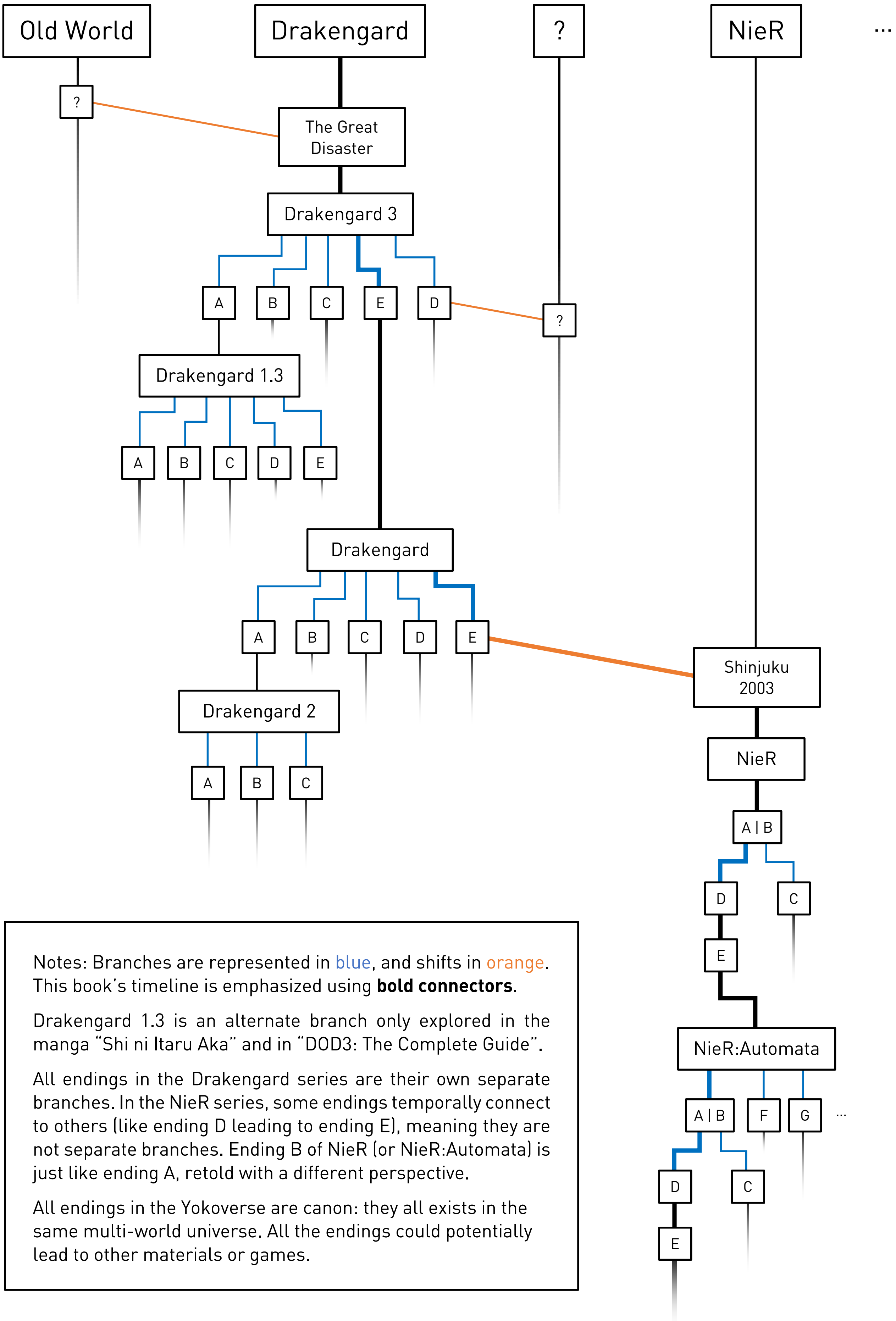
THE FLOWER'S PROGENY

Notes: One♂ only exists / is alive in branch A and E of DOD 3. Also, it is unclear if Gruen's progeny exists in branch E as it is never mentioned. The Flower is only transferred to Mikhail in branch C and E of DOD 3.



APPENDIX_3

THE YOKOVERSE'S TIMELINES



Notes: Branches are represented in blue, and shifts in orange. This book's timeline is emphasized using **bold connectors**.

Drakengard 1.3 is an alternate branch only explored in the manga "Shi ni Itaru Aka" and in "DOD3: The Complete Guide".

All endings in the Drakengard series are their own separate branches. In the NieR series, some endings temporally connect to others (like ending D leading to ending E), meaning they are not separate branches. Ending B of NieR (or NieR:Automata) is just like ending A, retold with a different perspective.

All endings in the Yokoverse are canon: they all exists in the same multi-world universe. All the endings could potentially lead to other materials or games.

APPENDIX_4

THE YORHA ROSTER

Legend

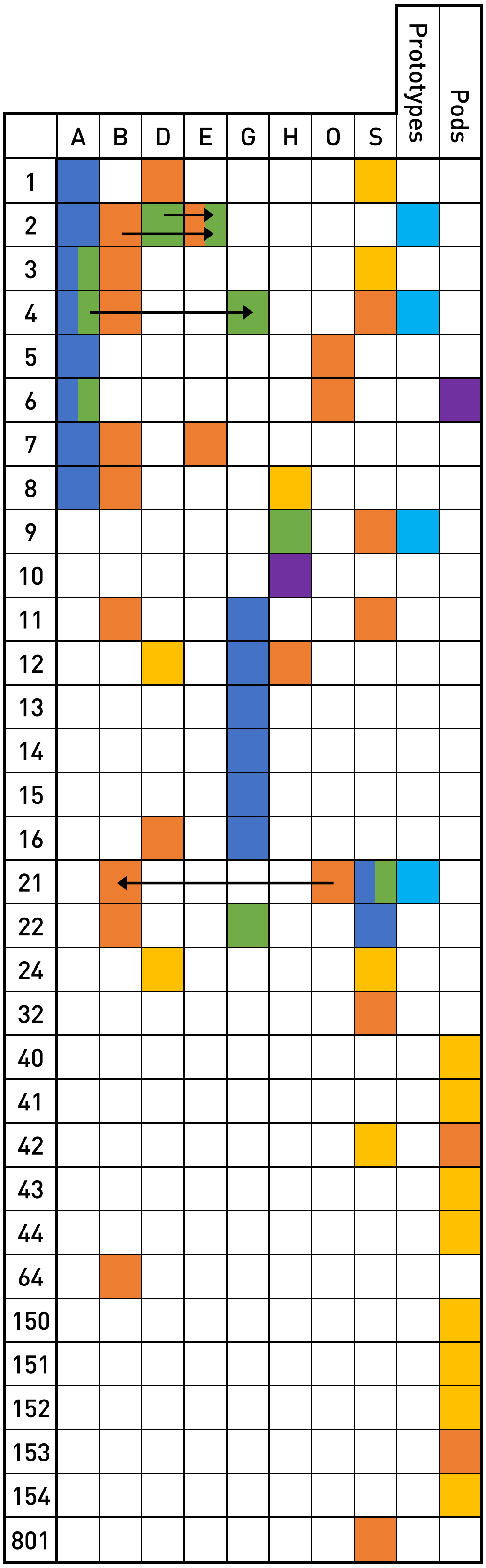
- Seen In-Game
- Mentioned In-Game
- NieR Music Concert
- Pearl Harbor Descent Squadron
- Moon Server Crew
- M Squad
- → Secret denomination or changed type.

Prototypes and Abbreviations

YoRHa androids involved in missions after the M Squad are labelled by their model number followed by their type designation. All prototypes before this were merely called by their model number only. This list is retroactive, utilizing the later adopted model number and type abbreviation for each android. Since the Attacker and Gunner model types were eventually discontinued, their abbreviated names are reversed.

YoRHa Unit Types

A → Attacker
B → Battler
D → Defender
E → Executioner
G → Gunner
H → Healer
O → Operator
S → Scanner



1S, 8H, 24S, 12D

There are mentioned in the YoRHa Body Storage Records, retrieve by 9S in the Bunker server. Apparently, 11B, 12D, and 12H personal data have been lost.

3S

The server administrator of the Bunker. He is only mentioned in the game.

4S

He gives out the quest Reconnaissance Squad. He has short dark hair in a similar style to 9S.

Seed

A prototype android tasked to evaluate the maximum burden level tolerable for the future YoRHa Units. Seed was a close friend of A2.

2D → 2E

He was a member of the M Squad. He was supposed to be a new Unit capable of withstanding Logic Viruses. He was secretly an E model.

9H

He was a member of the M Squad. He was tasked to repair units and backup their personal data.

9S

He is the Scanner that YoRHa No.2 Type B was put in charge of. His pod is Pod 153. He is programmed to have a kind and emotional personality. He is one of the most advanced Scanner models.

White

She is the commander of the YoRHa squadrons and director of the Bunker. Just like Black and Seed, she isn't a YoRHa Unit herself.

8B, 22B and 64B

They were a group of YoRHa betrayers. 2B was ordered to apprehend them.

3B

Leader of the Theta Squadron in the all-out attack in route C.

6O

She was a bright and friendly operator, responsible for YoRHa No.2 Type B.

11S

One of the scanner unit assigned to take down the machine's defenses in the beginning of route C. He has a high-pitched voice and communicates with 9S during the mission.

Black

The instructor of the M Squad. He was loyal despite knowing about White's questionable practices.

1D, 4B, 7E, 12H

Those units were part of the 243rd Descent Mission, along 2B and 11B. 1D was the squadron leader.

11B and 16D

11B was part of the 243rd Descend Mission. She died shortly after in the abandoned factory. 16D asked 2B and 9S to search for any mementos of her instructor.

21S

He was a member of the M Squad. He was specialized in seeking out the enemy and doing analysis. He had a twin, G22.

No.2, No.4, No.9, No.21

They were the original prototype of YoRHa Units, created by Zinnia. They were developed in the "Lab", an Orbital Satellite. After No.9 learned the truth about their black box, he freaked out and started a fire, killing all inhabitant and himself.

21O → 21B

She was an android communication operator, responsible for 9S. She voluntarily converted into a B unit for the all-out attack in route C. Infected by the virus, she is killed by A2 in front of 9S.

21S

One of the troops deployed for the Pearl Harbor Descent mission during the 14th Machine War. She was a prototype model who perished to further the future models. No. 21 was able to temporarily suppress the effects of the Logic Virus

32S

He was seen in the sub-quest "Retrieve The Confidential Intel". He was rebuilt and taken in by a male resistance member, in order to have someone to protect and be family with. However, he and the male resistance member were killed, probably by an Executioner unit.

24D

She is mentioned in the YoRHa-issue Blade's weapon story.

A4 → G4

He was part of the M Squad. Originally an Assault type, he decided to switch to a Gunner role.

10H

An android tasked to maintain the server on the moon.

A1, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, and 22S

They were members of the Pearl Harbor Descent squadron. Read more about their respective personality in the YoRHa Stage Play.

2B → 2E

She is an all-purpose battle android, deployed with Pod 042. She was given the designation of 2B as a cover by the Commander, who gave her orders to observe 9S. Her role is to assure he would not discover the true nature of Project YoRHa by executing him in case he dug too deep.

42S

A YoRHa Squadron idol from North 12C Defense HQ. He is a Publicity Agent, presumed to be deceased after an uphill battle with machines.

Pod 006

It is a special set of a few hundred Pods. It is very knowledgeable and capable.

A2

She is the only survivor of the Pearl Harbor Descent Squadron. She was wanted by Command for desertion and ordered to be destroyed on sight.

801S

A scanner unit atop the bunker who can be found in the hangar, in charge of the maintenance shop. He is one of the latest models. His name is a play on yaoi genre.

Pod 042 and Pod 153

Two sets of Pods assigned to YoRHa Units 2B and 9S. They became self-aware. Instead of following their task in completing Project YoRHa, they started to rebuild the bodies of 2B, 9S and A2.

5O

She spends her free time in her room, inside the bunker.

7B

She is seen sleeping in her room. She also participates in the all-out attack during route C.

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I want to thank all translators for bringing side materials to the western audience. Acquiring a deep understanding of this universe —and the characters populating it—would have been impossible without their amazing effort. Special thanks are due to Also, thank you to The Dark Id, his LPs are very fun to read, and his take on NieR was a great insight on the psychology of each character. Lastly, thanks to TheArk.wiki, its maintainer u/wesStyle, and /r/nier users for the extensive NieR Automata lore coverage.

The images used in this book either come from: (a) scans from the aforementioned official source materials, (b) official advertising images available online, (c) for the novella "Deliveries" (on page 65), images have been created by The Dark Id, , (e) screenshots of the aforementioned games, or (f) created by the author himself. Furthermore, the artwork used on page 325 is by @23i2ko.

Second edition: May 2021